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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000dde3>

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In Search of the Nigerian Pastoral: Nollywood and the Nigerian Creative-Industrial System



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Doctor of Philosophy Degree Submission

Development, Policy & Practice (DPP)

The Open University

October 2019

Abstract

This thesis explores the Nigerian creative-industrial system through the window of Nollywood. It questions conventional models of development by suggesting an alternative approach inspired by the historiography of consumption-based industrialization. Involving over 200 interviews and an extended ethnographic investigation of set craftsmanship and house-and-hotel film locations, the research was carried out in Lagos and Igboland.

The study focuses on several core elements of the consumer-industrial system -- film and television; carpentry and fabrication; and houses and hotels; and engages with other parts such as events' industries and printing and artizanal advertising.

The structure reflects two trajectories in Nollywood production: location production in Igboland and the new studio-system in Lagos. In the first part, the ways in which Nollywood and the Igbo built environment have interacted to produce new kinds of space are explored. The second part considers how Nigerian techniques of material fabrication have developed to produce new styles in three main areas: furnishings, TV and film sets and promotional installations. The ability of these practices to extend in surprising directions, establishing economy-wide linkages in financing, sales promotions and event-marketing, is a key part of this analysis. In the conclusion, the themes are considered through the lens of the Nigerian Pastoral to illuminate the intertwined development of distinctive Nigerian styles and tastes and competitive industrial sectors.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is the culmination of a project that began seven years ago when I first walked into David Wield's office in the High School Yards in Edinburgh. Over the course of an hour, David had transformed my vague curiosity in Nollywood and creative industries into an enthusiastic mission to find out how Nollywood skills could fuel a video-marketing revolution. Since that first meeting, David has time and time again energized, motivated and shepherded me through the PhD journey. On many occasions he has come to the rescue and I express my utmost gratitude to him.

José-Maria Muñoz joined the supervision team after the first year and injected a great new impetus into the project. The many informal conversations with José have moulded my ethnographic approach and attitude towards fieldwork. He has been a great friend and mentor and I am immensely grateful for his introduction to anthropology and inspiring me to get an education in the subject.

Giles Mohan has made razor-sharp interventions at key points throughout the PhD process. His ability to zoom in on the heart of the matter was responsible for numerous changes in research direction that have always turned out for the best.

I am very keen to also thank Paul Nugent, with whom I have gone full-circle over the course of the PhD. Paul's writing was responsible for bringing me back into African Studies and his courses and supervisions inspired my interest in connecting African popular culture and political economy. After my return to Edinburgh as a visiting student, Paul has again been hugely helpful and I have especially appreciated our informal academic engagement.

Many other academic colleagues have helped me along the way. Alessandro Jedlowski has been exceedingly generous in sharing his work and bringing me into the world of Nollywood Studies. Ola Uduku has also been an excellent mentor and collaborator and has been most kind in welcoming me into the Nigerian community, both in the UK and Igboland. I also must thank Tom Molony, Francoise Ugochukwu, Patrick Oloko and John Uwa for their great encouragement over the years.

My positive experience in Nigeria was underpinned by two lovely host families: Banke and Taiwo Lawal, and Stephen and Theresa Oshilaja. I thank all of them for fully including me in their family life and making great efforts to ensure that I was comfortable in Lagos.

Everyone in Nigeria who assisted in the research was also a great friend and partner in the PhD adventure. Peggy Ekene Godwin has been a tremendous help since the start of fieldwork, from

arranging my first stay in the East to transcribing many interviews. Above all, her companionship and personal support greatly enhanced the whole experience. In Anambra, Kennechukwu Okafor welcomed me to his own village when I first arrived in Igboland and he also provided great friendship as well as research assistance. During the final Igboland research period, Victoria Okpara and Stephen Ikeogu were a constant support in Enugu and I felt that the three of us were a great team. Whilst there, I received great support from the True God's Synagogue in Obosi and I would also like to thank Danny Rich for generously donating a large batch of prayer books to them.

The fieldwork in Ghana was a chance to reconnect with dear friends from my first trip to Africa in 2003. Ellie "Aba" Schimelman hosted me at Aba House and has been a source of wisdom, inspiration and kindness over many years. Robert Adzahkojo was a diligent, loyal and principled friend and collaborator during the whole trip and especially during our meetings with the market stall owners. Lastly, Adjoba Amihere added joy to the experience with her friendly and adventurous spirit during the workshop and expedition to the central region.

I extend my immense thanks to every one of the interviewees named in the appendix. In particular, meeting Mr Bedford was a turning point in the project and he showed huge generosity in allowing me inside his company. Likewise, I thank Leo Spartani for accepting me in Tinsel and for the many hours he spent explaining every aspect of his work and the industry. In Enugu, Princess Ugwu and the CDGN were very kind in including me in all the activities of their guild. Chief Tony and the whole Okeke family were also a great support in Enugu - from helping me uncover the history of Enugu hotels to ensuring my treatment when I had typhoid. In London and Lagos, Obi Emelonye has been an ever-present source of assistance since my very first Nollywood interview in 2011. Also in Lagos, Femi Akintunde Johnson was very generous in introducing me to the history of Nigerian entertainment awards and especially for unearthing the earliest archive footage of Nollywood awards ceremonies, which we have since digitized. I thank all of the employees of F4D for being so welcoming, answering my questions and including me in their activities. I formed many great relationships whilst there and am very glad to be friends with Ebuka Uzomo, Gerald Uloneme, Seun Oluwa, Williams Omolu, Austin Ekhaiyeme and many, many others.

Lastly, I thank my parents Robert Bud and Lisa Bud-Frierman, who have shared in this Nigerian journey – helping me to prepare for the trip as well as co-ordinating all manner of long-distance operations at short notice. They have given me the most positive support both prior to and throughout the PhD journey and I am enormously grateful to them.

This project was funded by the Open University, through the Full-Time Research Studentship 2014-18. I am extremely grateful to the Open University for giving me this opportunity and also for its generous fieldwork, without which this research would not have been possible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction -- in search of the Nigerian Pastoral

1. Framing the question

In their recent exemplary working paper, “Reframing African Political Economy: Clientelism, Rents and Accumulation as Drivers of Capitalist Transformation”, Hazel Gray and Lindsay Whitfield argue that a key problem in African economies is that growth has occurred without “structural change.” They suggest that real change will require the development of traditional manufacturing industries and not just

a proliferation of economic activities with low barriers to entry and low risk, such as wholesale and retail trade, hotels/tourism, transport and real estate, or economic activities geared towards the domestic market, such as telecommunications and banking.¹

Their argument echoes classic distinctions between productive and unproductive labour,² and their flipside: productive and unproductive consumption³. In an African context, Nigerian commentators have denounced in even stronger language the sectors that cater for elites’ “squandermania.” From the late 1980s, there has been great anxiety about this phenomenon. In 1987, Anambra State inaugurated an eight-man “Committee Against Squandermania”, followed a few years later by the publication of the tract “Squandermania Mentality” by the philosopher and theologian Chukwudum Barnabas Okolo:

Nigeria is a first rate consumer society, marked first of all by unproductive spending... one only has to consider advertisement of funerals, weddings, title-making, celebrations of all sorts... modern homes with all sorts of ...comforts.⁴

These approaches contrast with that taken in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) Creative Economy Report (CER) 2008, which was the first attempt to comprehensively apply the creative industries approach to developing countries. The report’s classification included a range of sub-sectors: “creative services” (advertising and architecture

¹ Hazel Gray and Lindsay Whitfield, “Reframing African Political Economy: Clientelism, Rents and Accumulation as Drivers of Capitalist Transformation,” Working paper (International Development LSE, October 2014), p.26

² See Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value, 4 vols*, Reprint edition (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 1987).

³ See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1899).

⁴ Chukwudum Barnabas Okolo, *Squandermania Mentality: Reflections on Nigerian Culture: Educational Philosophy for Nigerians* (Nsukka; Enugu: University Trust Publishers, 1994), pp.11-12.

etc), design-related activities (interiors, fashion and jewellery), audio-visual industries (film and television), and event-industries (live music performances etc). The CER argued that the creative industrial sector has a far higher growth rate than other areas, with exports of creative products growing at 13.5% per annum from developing countries between 2002 and 2008, totalling \$176 billion in the latter year.⁵ In addition, it argued that the sector is more resistant to shocks (such as the financial crisis) and that it carries a wide range of positive externalities. In its selection of global case studies, the report contained a special section on Nigeria, arguing that it was an exemplar of a leading African creative economy.

The point here is that the two literatures are talking about the very same consumption-orientated (and related service) industries⁶ - one interpreting them as under-productive, the other as super-productive.

2. Histories of consumption

In my view, a key tool for investigating these issues should be the approaches developed in studying historical industrializations in different parts of the world. Most scholars of industrialization in Africa do indeed use earlier (historical) industrializations as implicit or explicit templates. However, they rarely engage with the changing ways these industrializations have been interpreted within the discipline of history or the historiography of industrializations. Gray and Whitfield, for example, cite a number of historical industrializations but do not make reference to key developments within the historiography of industrialization (especially of the British and American cases) in the last 30 years. The key developments in this historiography have come from the added contribution of cultural historians and historians of technology - especially in relation to the history of consumption and consumption-orientated industries.

Since the early 1980s, histories of industrialization have shifted from a “productivist” towards a “consumptivist” orientation. The earlier narrative had emphasized technological innovations (in spinning, weaving and steam) and efficient, standardized new forms of labour organization. The underlying dynamics of this approach saw industrialization as a cumulative, teleological

⁵ UNCTAD, *CER 2010 Creative Economy: A Feasible Development Option* (Geneva: United Nations, 2010), p. xxiii

⁶ Whitfield and Gray’s point is about the service economy in general, of which creative industries are only a part. However their invocation of real estate and hotels (involving architecture, interior design, furniture and furnishings), retail (involving advertising and branding) and tourism (involving experience goods such as galleries, museums, arts and crafts) clearly points towards the Creative Economy.

process of learning towards pre-determined goals - either producing commodities with a pre-existing value (e.g. garments) in a more efficient way, or new products whose value could easily be explained in functionalist terms (e.g. steam engines). The new narrative, by contrast, emphasizes cultural changes that included new patterns of taste and consumption, influenced by an emerging “middling-sort” culture of luxury. Whilst the productivist approach emphasized spinning and weaving, this literature emphasized the roller printer (and corresponding fashion for calico fabrics) as a key development. This way of thinking about industrialization is far more contingent as the products and techniques are not pre-determined or cumulative, but are unpredictable and are in a constant state of emergence, due to the interplay of increasing technological capacities with changing cultures of consumption.

Historians of consumption have focused on two contexts in particularly great depth: eighteenth-century England and early-mid twentieth-century America. Their interpretations of consumption-driven industrialization in each of these contexts will be outlined in some detail. The aim here is not to make mechanical correlations between historical industrializations in England/America and recent developments in Nigeria. Neither is it to make a typology of industrializations into which the Nigerian case can be placed. The British and American cases are outlined as they have an especially deep historiography and present a fresh angle from which to explore the topic of industrialization in other contexts.

Eighteenth-Century England and import substitution

Frank Trentmann has argued that the revolution in consumption first began in late-seventeenth-century Holland and turn-of-the-eighteenth-century England. Although rapid accelerations in consumption had occurred in other regions prior to this period⁷, this was the first time in which “semi-luxury”⁸ products, similar to those that had previously been reserved for aristocrats and wealthy merchants, became widely consumed by the “middling sort.” These products have been described as, “‘populuxe’ goods... that added a touch of class to the life of a journeyman or domestic servant”⁹. They included a range of products for domestic interiors

⁷ Trentmann considers late-medieval Italian city states.

⁸ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁹ Maxine Berg, “New Commodities, Luxuries and Their Consumers in Eighteenth century England,” in *Consumers and Luxury Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, ed. Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 63–87, on 67-68. Here Berg is quoting Cissie Fairchild

including table-wares and furnishings such as a linens and curtains, as well as “inexpensive copies of aristocratic luxuries like fans, snuff boxes and umbrellas.”¹⁰

Within this historiography there are a few general categories of approach for explaining the change. Two of these focus on generally endogenous changes: with one emphasizing gradual, *longue-duree* increases in standards of living and wages, and the other putting the stress on changes in religious and moral attitudes towards consumption and work.¹¹

The third approach, detailed here, has been pioneered by Maxine Berg. In the first part of her argument, Berg contends that the arrival of imports from India, China and Japan stimulated a revolution in taste for “novelties, fashion goods and new things”¹² in the English market. She emphasizes how Indian calicos and Chinese and Japanese porcelains - as well as chintzes, silks, fine cottons and ornamental bronze and brassware - stimulated new fashions and sensibilities. The goods had such a great impact in part due to the quality, customization and aesthetic variety they offered - with a range of fine colours, patterns and textures that could be tailored for each order. In addition, the East India Company and other trading firms used a new scale and sophistication of marketing to develop semi-luxury markets for the new goods. They contributed to a “revolution of sociability” which included the emergence of new contexts and material settings of consumption, with “new social practices of dress, display and dining and drinking rituals associated with porcelain cabinets, taking tea, coffee-house culture...family dinner services.”¹³

In the second part of her narrative, Berg proposes that English imitation of these imported goods using new manufacturing technologies resulted in great product innovation. The imports were not directly replicated, with little attempt to learn the production technologies that had been used to produce them in Asia.¹⁴ Instead, the goods were reproduced in new forms using the new technologies of the “industrial enlightenment.” In the case of coloured

¹⁰ Berg, “New Commodities, Luxuries and Their Consumers in Eighteenth century England”, p.67, quoting Cissie Fairchilds.

¹¹ See Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: Penguin, 2016); Jan De Vries, “The Industrial Revolution and the Industrious Revolution,” *The Journal of Economic History* 54, no. 2 (1994): 249–270.

¹² Berg, “New Commodities, Luxuries and Their Consumers in Eighteenth century England”, p.66

¹³ Maxine Berg, “In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, no. 182 (2004): 85–142 on. p.98

¹⁴ Berg points out that an exception was the search for the recipe of porcelain. See Berg “In Pursuit of Luxury.”

fabrics, instead of painting and dying, the English fabric manufacturers used technology from the book-printing industry, including block and plate printing, to imprint the fabrics. Often, the imitation involved a process of skeuomorphism, in which the new goods were made in the same form as the imported product but with a different material. For example, instead of producing another porcelain, the Staffordshire potters created similar designs using the new material creamware that had been created through experimentations with frit, ash and bone.

Crucially for my argument, Berg also makes a very original connection between her insights and those of international development theorists. In this regard, she critically engages with the model of Import-Substitution industrialization.

The original version of “import substitution” became popular during the 1950s within international development circles. In the early renditions of this model, it was argued that through protecting a national market, domestic “infant” consumer industries would be able to grow up to satisfy this demand. These policies were superseded by export-orientated policies during the 1980s, which emphasized free trade and export-led growth. Berg’s concept of eighteenth-century import substitution in some ways transcends this dichotomy. As in the case of the original import-substitution theorists, the development of domestic industries that satisfy a domestic market is the end-point of her model. However, unlike the earlier approach, exposure to imports is essential to the development of this market, through “stimulating a dynamic development of domestic consumption... fostered by new desires for non-traditional goods and...changed consumer horizons.”¹⁵ Whilst Berg uses the import-substitution model to try to shed light on her eighteenth-century case, I shall argue that this can be turned on its head: that elements of her model could be a helpful, and perhaps more sophisticated, way of thinking about industrialization in a developing-country context

Twentieth-century America - Hollywood

Cultural historians such as Harvey Molotch and Charles Eckert, who study American industrialization in the early-twentieth century, have put forward a narrative that adapts Berg’s eighteenth-century model.¹⁶ In parallel with Berg’s thesis, they argue that a new

¹⁵ Berg, “In Pursuit of Luxury”, 103

¹⁶ Harvey Molotch, “L.A. as Design Product: How Art Works in a Regional Economy”, in *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. A Scott and E Soja (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 225–75; Charles Eckert, “The Carole Lombard in Macy’s Window”, *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 3, no. 1 (1978): 1–21; reprinted in Charles Eckert, “The Carole Lombard in Macy’s Window,” in *Movies and Mass Culture*, ed. John Belton (London: Athlone Press, 1996), 95–118

technology used in practices of imitation resulted in great product innovation. The Hollywood film industry, which emerged in the 1910s, required the imitation of a wide variety of consumer goods so that they were usable on set. In order to create a *mise-en-scène* (including costume, makeup and sets) that appeared naturalistic when transposed through the camera lens and onto celluloid, major design modifications were made to everyday consumer items. For example, filmmakers faced the problem of actors' motion - a central element of drama - not being visible on-camera because their clothing was too voluminous. From 1920, the costumiers therefore worked with fashion designers to develop lighter fabrics and styles that would allow bodily movement to be seen.

In the late 1920s, film costuming again had to be overhauled because many of the fabrics rustled too much for the early audio technology of the "talkies." In the case of make-up, the arrival of Technicolor in the 1930s stimulated the wholesale replacement of the previously dominant greasepaints, liquids and salves - which were far too reflective for the saturated colours. "Pancake" was instead introduced - originally created by Max Factor - which was a compressed-powder product that would be dabbed onto actors' faces with a wet sponge.

In addition to production technologies, the "organizational exigencies" of production also shaped the way consumer goods were reproduced for sets. The "Hays Code" of 1930, for example, placed requirements on the coverage provided by actresses' dress. Costume designers therefore moved away from skin-exposing garments to form-exposing ones - with such fabrics as silk and satin used extensively for their ability to cling to actresses' bodies.

In the second part of the argument, the American historians show how the Hollywood movies had a great power to stimulate new tastes for the re-imagined goods that they depicted. The settings of the films provided an extraordinarily effective stage for these consumer goods as they tended to portray everyday contemporary sites of consumption, such as suburban houses and "fashion salons, department stores, beauty parlors..." rather than fantastic or historical worlds.¹⁷

The sensibility towards everyday, somewhat non-specific settings was partly motivated by a desire for the films not to fall foul of external fashion cycles. The production workflow of Hollywood films was relatively long by the 1920s - with films being seen in the cinemas two or three years after pre-production. It was therefore necessary to avoid high-fashion or cutting-edge garments and furnishings, and instead to depict simple styles that were attractive but

¹⁷ Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," in *Movies and Mass Culture*, see p. 116

also timeless - an aesthetic that became known as the “American look.” At the same time, the sensibility was also shaped by an awareness that the films also had a promotional impact on the goods they depicted. Cecil B. De Mille, for example, described this Hollywood contemporary genre (which he was instrumental in pioneering) as a “response to pressures from the publicity and sales people... they didn't want historical ‘costume dramas’ but much ‘modern stuff with plenty of clothes, rich sets and action’.”¹⁸

Due to its “everyday” settings, Hollywood tended to act more as “a popularizer than a trendsetter”¹⁹. Whilst this meant that Los Angeles could still not compete with the status of Paris or even New York in high-fashion, it did have great benefits for Californian industries on the mass-market level. Eckert points to an investigation, conducted as early as 1912, by a group of German and English manufacturers blaming Hollywood for a decline in demand for their manufactures and an increase in demand for American goods,

The peoples of many countries now consider America as the arbiter of manners, fashions, sports, customs and standards of living... Audiences saw American sewing machines, typewriters, furniture, clothing, shoes, steam shovels, saddles, automobiles and soon began to want these things.²⁰

By the mid-1930s, Hollywood was even having an impact on Paris, with an American-Parisian fashion-buyer commenting,

In the old days even the Frenchwoman of the petite bourgeoisie managed to achieve a certain chic, if she couldn't, she seemed to prefer to go utterly dowdy. But all that is changed... “are Parisiennes to be caught on their own home grounds going Hollywood... [like] Joan Crawfords – but Crawfords only five feet tall” (Saturday Evening Post , May 18, 1935).²¹

The symbiotic growth of the Los Angeles' manufacturing industries with the film industry is reflected in the garment and furniture manufacturer figures during the early Hollywood period. In 1900, the city had just one garment manufacturer, rising to 130 in 1937 and 4000-5000 by the 1990s, making it the number one garment-producing city in America, even ahead of New York. Similarly, the number of furniture manufacturing firms rose from none in 1900 to over

¹⁸ Eckert, “The Carol Lombard in Macy’s Window”, p. 102.

¹⁹ Melissa Leventon, “Distinctly Californian: Modernism in Textiles and Fashion,” in *Living in a Modern Way: California Design 1930-1965*, ed. Wendy Kaplan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011), 233–61, ON 256.

²⁰ Charles Eckert, “The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window”, p.99

²¹ Charles Eckert, “The Carole Lombard in Macy’s Window,” 101

150 in 1937, at which time the Los Angeles “five-county” area had become the country’s leading producer of modern and outdoor furniture.

Beyond elements that appear in films, Hollywood set fabrication has had an impact on production processes even more widely across the economy. Through their experience in set construction, Hollywood workers gained the skills “that all other fantasists needed - technical skills and resources in converting fantastic ideas into physical realities.”²² They therefore contributed to a wider milieu that melds fantasy and reality in a film-like way.

Cyril Stanley Smith has explored this milieu in terms of “play domains”, in which playfulness and whimsy have a central role in the economic landscape. The Los Angeles region is a world-leader in this area, with leading examples including Disneyland (which is divided into “on-stage” and “back-stage” areas) and the Mattel company, which produces the Barbie doll. This form of fabrication has resulted in spaces with a simulacrum or “hyper-real” quality. In this regard, Los Angeles architecture has, in some cases, taken on a mimetic style²³, as buildings’ forms have been re-connected with their functions in unconventional and playful ways. The explosion of this genre during the 1940s and 50s began with the giant stucco Tail o’ the Pup hotdog stand, followed by a host of similar building such as a Tamale shop in the shape of an oversized tamale and an ice-cream shop in the form of an igloo.

3. The Nigerian Context

Histories of Nigerian consumption and the Nigerian Pastoral

The discussion will now turn to the specific relevance of these historical narratives to understanding the Nigerian context. The histories of consumption narratives emphasize a particular interplay between style and taste. In the eighteenth-century English case, the importation of new foreign styles stimulated new tastes, which, in turn, sparked the fabrication of new styles. In the Hollywood case, the fabrication of new styles through the film production process stimulated new tastes, which in turn encouraged the manufacture of new styles. In both cases, the styles that emerged at the end of these processes were part of imaginaries associated with particular regional or national contexts and were central in establishing competitiveness.

²² Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (University of California Press, 2009), 106-107

²³ which has been labelled, “programmatic architecture”

In order to explore this topic of styles and imaginaries, I employ the concept of “the pastoral.” This concept originates in literature studies as a particular literary genre, but has more recently been developed as a key characteristic of craft theory by Glenn Adamson who has developed William Empson’s 1935 version of the concept which explicitly eschewed the specific reference to nature.²⁴ In the pastoral, a place slightly away from our time and location is imagined. However this imaginary is not of a foreign world, but our own; or as Adamson describes, it feels like a memory, but is not actually about history.²⁵ It presents the world in simplified terms but offers profound insights through doing this, by “putting the complex into the simple.”²⁶ As Adamson argues, it has a particular relevance for studying craft because it refers to the way in which the fabrication of objects such as furniture operates “as a symbolic gesture about the value of lifestyle, integrity and so forth.”²⁷ It often also has a moral element in the clerical sense of the churchman telling a parable to shepherd his flock.²⁸

In the Hollywood case, the pastoral included the “California lifestyle” of “Spanish-style” houses and later the one-story ranch-houses with swimming pools and the arid terrain of the western.²⁹ The ranch houses contributed to a modernist feel with clean lines and large glass sliding patio doors. This imagery also included the Los Angeles “beach-active look” of leisurewear including jeans, swimming suits, pedal pushers, surf-wear, slacks, sportswear and toppers.³⁰ The style also placed great emphasis on the sensation of comfort and relaxation, reflected in such easy-fit elements as elastic waistbands rather than belts.

In this thesis, I am interested in whether there is a “Nigerian Pastoral” and, if so, through what processes it has been formed. Before I first departed for fieldwork in June 2015, I had a pre-conceived idea of what a Nigerian Pastoral might be like, reflected in my probation board document, “Value meshwork and the Nigerian pastoral.” I imagined that it would have a clear

²⁴ Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007). 104. Adamson explains his use of the work of William Empson, *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (London : Chatto & Windus, 1935)

²⁵ Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).

²⁶ Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, 104. Here Adamson is quoting Empson.

²⁷ Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, 104-105

²⁸ It also often traditionally has a rustic element that I exclude and therefore modify this concept slightly

²⁹ See Collection of Jay D. Frierman, photographs of Southern Californian Architecture (Collection 1360.) UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles. This pastoral has been evocatively captured by Thom Anderson in his film essay, “Los Angeles Plays Itself”, (Thom Anderson Productions, 2003).

³⁰ Leventon, “Distinctly Californian”, p.248

equivalence to the English and American cases. However, after my first three months of fieldwork, I couldn't see anything recognizable as a Nigerian Pastoral. This led me to rethink what a pastoral might look like - that it could be more subtle in style and less self-conscious than the earlier English and American cases.

In addition to the "pastoral", there are a number of specific threads from the preceding discussions that do re-appear in my Nigerian narrative in different configurations. A key theme in the Nigerian context - in common with the earlier histories - has been the immense expansion of spending on houses and domestic interiors, especially in the South-Eastern region. Echoing a topic touched on in the Hollywood section, these houses and interiors have intertwined with the "organizational exigencies of film production", particularly in their use for location shooting.³¹ Another key development has been the impact of imported furnishings and mediations (such as catalogues and TV shows) on Nigerian tastes and manufacturing practices. These practices include the reproduction of furnishings using local technologies and in ways informed by the needs of Nollywood video-film production.

Theoretical Overview

The central argument therefore is that through the circulations of skills, imaginaries and materials between creative producers and tasteful consumers, distinctive product styles have been incubated. Nollywood has been central to this process. The growth of the film market has been driven by the emergence of a distinctively Nigerian film product. Crucially for this thesis, in tandem with Nollywood, a host of other domestic sectors characterized by a Nigerian style are also emerging.

This Nigerian style has emerged in two ways. First, this style has imbued the existing landscape, such as when films are shot in location houses. Second, new products have been fabricated from scratch – such as film sets in purpose-built studios.

The choice of theoretical tools reflects the two-part structure of the thesis. Part One relates to the built environment in Igboland. Whilst this is influenced by Nollywood, structures such as houses and hotels function outside of the film world, in the everyday lives of their residents and neighbours. I therefore employ an approach – including experience economy scenes and creative industry clusters – emerging from regional studies, which engages with the societal aspects of production. The second part is largely concerned with material fabrication

³¹ Harvey Molotch, "L.A. as Design Product: How Art Works in a Regional Economy," in *The City: Los Angeles and Urban Theory at the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. A Scott and E Soja (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 225–75 on p. 245

specifically for the purpose of films and events, often within the artificial world of the studio. I therefore use a range of theoretical instruments focused on the practices of fabrication and media production. These include approaches to material fabrication – including innovation, “cultural improvisation” and industrial functions – as well as those framed specifically for the study of media production – including “aesthetic formations”.

Empirical Context

On a concrete level, the thesis will explore the development of a group of “consumer-orientated cultural industries”³² in Nigeria over the last 40 years. Sally Weller has suggested that these types of industries constitute “trans-sectoral complexes”, which are made up of “overlapping articulations” between the fabricatory industries, television production, consumables marketing and the built environment³³. The relationships in her schema are less formalized than in the comparable production network perspectives, but have rather looser “event-based” relationships.

In this thesis, I consider a trans-sectoral complex of consumer-orientated cultural industries in which Nollywood plays a key role. Within this complex, I focus on film and television, houses and hotels and small-scale manufacturing (especially carpentry). To a lesser extent, I consider event industries and promotional industries for consumer goods. The film and television industry has a particular point of interplay with each of the other sectors: houses and hotels are used as shooting locations and sets and props are made by carpenters and other fabricators. These interplays have in turn reflected back, and had an impact, on these industries.

Through studying Nollywood in this way, I am placing it within a wider industrial narrative within which it is not usually categorized. One exception to this is the anthropologist John McCall’s research in the early 2000s. In an evocative passage on the filming of *Ebube* in Igboland, he re-imagined the Nollywood film set as a factory,

But acting is only the most visible occupation associated with the industry. The filming of *Ebube* required the services of more than 100 people. The costumers’ area hummed with activity as women with Chinese foot-treadle sewing machines

³² Sally Weller, “Beyond ‘Global Production Networks’: Australian Fashion Week’s Trans-Sectoral Synergies,” *Growth and Change* 39, no. 1 (2008): 104–122

³³ Weller, “Beyond ‘Global Production Networks’”, on 108

fit costumes on the spot. Make-up artists and hairdressers put the finishing touches on chiefs, native doctors, and warriors. Set builders erected a traditional village, complete with elders' meetinghouse, while teams of technical specialists fiddled with cameras, booms, and mixing boards.³⁴

Placing Nollywood within this context of material production is a fresh departure from the dominant Nollywood narratives. These have either located it within the development of trading or theatrical traditions. In the trading narrative, one story in particular has been relentlessly retold:

Kenneth Nnebue (an Igbo trader) needed to sell some cassettes ... and shot *Living in Bondage* ... the people who sold video-cassettes then became distributors, as they had the necessary equipment for the distribution of copies ... Then more and more people got involved with making films.³⁵

A variant of this narrative has received support in the academic sphere, significantly from Brian Larkin.³⁶ He argues that the industry should be seen as part of the development of traders' piracy networks, an "infrastructure of piracy", through which US and Hong Kong movies had been copied and distributed since the start of the 1980s.

The theatrical narrative, comes in two flavours: one which emphasizes the role of television and one that of the Yoruba travelling theatre. On the television side, Obaseki has described the industry as the "child of television", emphasizing the crisis in Nigerian television in the late 1980s, which led to an exodus of actors into home video at the beginning of the 1990s.³⁷ The Yoruba travelling theatre narrative also emphasizes the movement of actors, in addition to directors, from theatre into home video prior to the television exodus.³⁸ These narratives therefore foreground either the role of distributors or actors/directors, whilst the historical strands related to technical workers are neglected.

³⁴ J. McCall, "Nollywood Confidential: The Unlikely Rise of Nigerian Video Film", *Transition* 95 (2004): 98-109, see pp. 101-2.

³⁵ See Don Pedro Obaseki, "Nigerian Video as the 'Child of Television,'" in *Nollywood: The Video Phenomenon in Nigeria*, ed. Pierre Barrot and Ibbo Daddy Abdoulaye (Oxford: James Currey, 2008), 72-76, on p. 74).

³⁶ Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

³⁷ Haynes also reviews the development of Nigerian television, see Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

³⁸ Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yorùbá Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

4. The Nollywood production context: from location shooting to the Studio System

An important distinction that underlies the thesis' argument is the difference between location and studio production. Until around 2004, almost all content was shot on location - in real-life houses and hotels. In the film industry, a few cities have been used for location shooting, with the epicentre moving around various sites from the industry's inception in the early 1990s. From 1992 to 1996, Lagos was the main shooting centre, with Enugu and its environs leading thereafter.³⁹ During the time of Enugu's dominance, there was a brief period of competition from Aba⁴⁰ as well as some shooting in the "rural towns" around Onitsha.⁴¹ Since 2008, Asaba and its surrounding villages⁴² have become the main locations, with estimates as high as 60% of all Nigerian films being shot in the city in 2015.

In the television industry, which dates back to 1957 in the Western Region, there was a fairly similar pattern. Although small studios were used for simple set-ups like news programmes, more ambitious genres, such as drama, relied on location shooting. This took place in various cities around the country, with state stations established in Benin, Jos, Kano, Port Harcourt and Sokoto in the mid-1970s.

Since around 2004, there has been a major change in television and film production with the dawn of a Nigerian Studio System. Whilst this system is currently far more developed in the television case, a similar change is beginning to occur in film. Moreover, the two industries are deeply entangled, with production teams moving freely between the two. Studio production is fundamentally different to location shooting as filming is carried out within controlled shooting environments. Instead of filming in the real-life locations (which can only be partially modified by set decorators), studios sets comprise worlds that are entirely fabricated by art directors and are insulated from the outside world using sound-proofing and powerful artificial lighting.

In the television sector, a number of large studios have emerged over the last fifteen years in Lagos. The biggest are Ultima Studios in Lekki and MNET studios in Ikeja, with other important examples including Dream Factory Studios, Rapid Blue Studios, Royal Roots Studios, Koga Studios and ROK Studios. The two shows that have perhaps so far been the biggest landmarks in studio production in Nigeria are *Tinsel* (shot at MNET) and *Project Fame West Africa* (shot at

³⁹ Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (University of Chicago Press, 2016). 142. Interview with Director Kennechukwu Okafor, 22 December 2015

⁴⁰ Haynes: *Nollywood*, 142

⁴¹ including the rural towns of Umuoji and Obosi

⁴² Including the villages of Illah, Okpanam and Ogbolu

Ultima), which both launched in 2008.⁴³ These are large-scale productions, with an industrial scale of output. Tinsel, for example, has a crew of almost 100 and involves the shooting of thirteen scenes per episode, with six episodes per week. At 260 episodes per year, a total of around 2000 had been shot at the time of writing. Apart from the studios themselves, there are four other key actors in the new studio system: the sponsor, the production company, the set contractor and the broadcaster.

The sponsors are the main financial drivers of the new system providing such a high proportion of funding that their names usually adorn the titles of the show. *MTN Project Fame*, *Glo Dance with Peter* and *Airtel Touching Lives* are just a few examples. Sponsoring companies have at times included FMCG (fast moving consumer goods) companies⁴⁵ and banks, but a special connection has emerged with the mobile telecoms sector. The deregulation of the Nigerian telecoms industry in 2001 (including the “GSM” auction⁴⁶) led to the dominance of several large telecoms players in Nigeria, with the “Big Four” of MTN, Glo, Etisalat and Airtel emerging by 2010. The sector is unique in Nigeria in that it is a heavily concentrated consumer industry with high growth and strong corporate development, but at the same time it remains a “buyers” market - there is great competition between the companies as consumers benefit from low switchover costs.⁴⁷ This has motivated the firms to invest huge amounts of money in promotional activities, including branding. In addition to branding, these companies saw the studios as the source of new high-definition content that could be used to stimulate an increased demand for the mobile data that they sell.⁴⁸

The sponsoring companies typically pay a production company, such as Playcenter Nigeria, to manage the direction and cinematography of the studio-based shows.⁴⁹ In order to create the sets and props, these firms contract with set construction companies. For the past decade, 4FD, owned by Mr Bedford Baloebi, has been the biggest such company in the television arena.

⁴³ See Chapter 2: Methodology for more information on these shows

⁴⁵ Including Unilever, Nigerian Breweries and Guinness

⁴⁶ GSM refers to the Global System for Mobile Communication

⁴⁷ Interview with Managing Director of Ultima Studios Femi Ayeni, 5 October 2015. Ultima Studios is, along with MNET Studios, the leading television production facility in Lagos.

⁴⁸ Presentation by Chike Maduegbuna, CEO of Afrinolly, to AFRIFF, 2 November 2015.

⁴⁹ The particular configuration of the main actors in the studio system varies. In *Project Fame*, the studio and production company were one company, whilst the set contractor, sponsor and broadcaster were separate. In contrast, another show, *Dance With Peter*, the studio and set contractor were the same company, whilst the production company, sponsor and broadcaster were separate.

The fourth important actor is the broadcaster. The emergence of the broadcaster DSTV/MNET in Nigeria has been a key development as it pioneered satellite television broadcasting, resulting in a huge inflow of money into the television industry. It has expanded into production itself, owning a number of studios, as well as being the major customer for many independent production companies.

The Nigerian film industry has been somewhat slower than television to adopt studio-based production but it has also begun to move in this direction. Over the past decade, Nollywood's most successful production team (comprised of director Kunle Afolayan and Art Director Pat Nebo) has made extensive use of studios for its big-budget productions⁵⁰. Nebo has constructed large temporary studios customized for each production. In some cases, this has involved a kind of hybrid production, with the temporary studio built at a location to enable both forms of shooting.

In addition, state governments have also begun to get involved in ushering in the studio system. In 2007, the Cross River State Governor Donald Duke opened the Tinapa Studios near to Calabar. Although the studio has suffered due to its remote location, several large productions have been made there, including *Half of a Yellow Sun* in 2013.⁵¹ There are also a number of other state-government sponsored studio projects or "film villages" that are still in development.⁵²

5. Research Questions:

Main Question:

1. How can we understand the Nigerian creative-industrial system through the window of Nollywood? Does an exploration of this system suggest a possible path for industrialization in Africa?

Sub-questions:

2. How have Nollywood and the Igbo built environment interacted to produce new kinds of scene?

⁵⁰ Such as for *The CEO* and *Phone Swap*

⁵¹ The studio has also been leased for television production by Ebony Life TV and HiTV.

⁵² It seems that the creation of "film villages" is a particularly popular pursuit amongst state governors. There are currently four in various states of completion. There is a project to make a Bayelsa Film Village in Bayelsa State, but work seems to have stopped.

3. How have Nigerian techniques of material fabrication developed to produce new styles of furnishings, sets and promotional forms?
4. Overall, has a “Nigerian Pastoral” style begun to emerge and what are its features?

5. Thesis Outline

Chapter two details the methodology. The rest of the thesis is split into two parts, each containing two chapters. The first chapter of each part serves as a theoretical and thematic introduction to the second, each of which is empirical. The ordering of the two parts reflects the sequence of film-set development in Nigeria. **Part one** (chapters three and four) is about location-film production and is centred in Igboland. This is the older production form - going back to Nollywood’s earliest days - but has also continued on its own trajectory into the present. **Part two** (chapters five and six) is focused on studio production in Lagos, which began in around 2004, and has become increasingly important in the years since.

Chapter three begins with a history of houses and hotels in Igboland, emphasizing their great importance as a consumption form in the region. It then introduces the distinction between creative-industry clusters and experience-economy “scenes.” Creative industry clusters are focused on the ‘spatial organization of production’ and tend to be concerned with mobile products, which are consumed in a different location to where they are produced. Experience economy “scenes”, in contrast, are concerned with the “spatial contextualization of consumption” and focus on non-mobile products and services which are produced and consumed at the same site. **Chapter four** is an analysis of location film shooting in Igbo houses and hotels through this cluster-scene lens. It explores the articulation between the Nollywood house/hotel scene and the Nollywood production cluster over a twenty-five-year period. At times, this relationship was easy and reciprocal and at other points it was more fractious. The latter, in particular, often had creative consequences - with the emergence of new kinds of buildings with distinctive styles.

Part two then turns to the controlled-filming environment of studio production in Lagos. Unlike the Igbo houses, the studio sets are consciously fabricated for the purpose of filming so production takes centre-stage in this part. **Chapter five** begins with a description of a change in the texture of Nigerian interiors that emerged with studio production. It then considers several ways of engaging with the deep dynamics of craft production, including Ingold’s theory of “cultural improvisation” and Meyer’s concept of “aesthetic formations” - both of which shed

particular light on processes of reproduction and imitation. Echoing Berg, it highlights that the importation and dissemination of goods and mediations make such imitation possible. The issue of how craft techniques combine with other kinds of practice is then considered through the concept of “craft displacements.” To this end, Scranton’s four-way classification of custom-batch-bulk-mass is found helpful for locating “craft” in relation to other functions. The occurrence of craft displacements not just within production, but across the value chain (especially between production and marketing) is explored, before a discussion of these issues in specific relation to the film industry. The chapter concludes by emphasizing that an understanding of both the deep dynamics of production and of the overall configuration of each industry’s “craft displacements” will be essential to explaining the emergence of the new Nigerian Pastoral.

Chapter six incorporates this approach to explore the emergence of three fabricatory sectors in Lagos: “modern” furniture carpentry, set fabrication and promotional-installation production. The emergence of each form is considered both in terms of the fine-grains of their reproductive process and their “craft displacements.” The chapter begins by highlighting changing patterns in the importation of goods and mediations into Nigeria, which had a great impact on the practice of furniture carpentry. It then turns to set-fabrication, which involved the adaptation of this carpentry to enable interaction with the technology of the camera lens. It therefore comes close to directly echoing the historians of consumption narratives, with importation stimulating new imitatory practices that proved creative due to the new technologies employed. In the last section, set-fabrication practices and styles are themselves shown to have been modified and redeployed as “promotional installations”, therefore making a key contribution to industrial sectors far beyond film production. The thesis ends with the **conclusion** that draws together the findings from the two parts of the thesis, then reflects on their significance and suggests new paths of policy and research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

The qualitative research methodology

There are two broad categories of data collection: qualitative and quantitative. Thomas et al. argue that each of these methodologies have an associated data-collection form.¹ The quantitative methodologies generally use the sample survey technique whilst qualitative methods employ participant observation and semi-structured focused interviews. In order to carry out quantitative techniques, a well-developed understanding of the population is required. The qualitative methodology is more appropriate for this study because it can make good use of the information from diverse informants in an area which has had only limited academic study and in which our understanding of the relevant questions is evolving. Only after this anthropological and other qualitative studies have been performed, could quantitative studies be meaningfully interpreted.

Methodological traditions

The variety of methodologies used by qualitative researchers has been described in terms of research traditions. Whilst there are different ways of classifying these, I have drawn upon the synthetic taxonomy of Durdella, which draws upon those of Denzin and Lincoln, Creswell, and Schram.² This distinguishes between ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry and case study. In particular, this thesis employs methodologies from three of these: ethnography, grounded theory and

¹ Alan Thomas, Joanna Chataway and Marc Wuyts, *Finding Out Fast: Investigative Skills for Policy and Development* (London: SAGE, 1998).

² Richard Durdella, *Qualitative Dissertation Methodology : A Guide for Research Design and Methods*.

(Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018); Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage Publications, 1998); T.H. Schram, *Conceptualizing Qualitative Inquiry. Mindwork for Fieldwork in Education and Social Sciences*. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2003); J.W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry in Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1996)

case study. This literature highlights six dimensions of each research methodology: focus; goals; data sources; sampling and setting; data collection methods; researcher roles; and data analysis and interpretation procedures.

One of the key goals of the thesis was to uncover the cultural processes that underlie the emergence of distinct product styles. This entailed understanding the cultural experiences of the research subjects and therefore the use of ethnographic methods. I was embedded in Mr Bedford's set-building company, in which I became a participant-observer: living, working and conducting ethnographic interviews with the set workers. I reflected on and interpreted these experiences to understand the material culture of the set world. For example, I discovered that the set workers imbibed the aesthetics of the set and styled themselves to reflect its lifecycle.

Elsewhere in the research, I employed the grounded theory methodology. I conducted numerous interviews with industry-informants that were semi-structured, rather than ethnographic. I then coded this material in the data-management software MAXQDA. This coding involved initial, intermediate and theoretical stages, relating to initial grouping of codes, putting them into larger families or breaking them apart, and finally drawing out my argument from the overall contours of the relationships.³ This was an iterative process: after the initial period of fieldwork, I returned to England and carried out the initial coding, which informed the subsequent phase of data collection. This phase was therefore more focused, relying less on the snowball sampling method and on a more purposeful sampling strategy.

As I was focused on studying industries, I also employed the case study method. My research involved studying bounded units of both industries and businesses. For example, I focused on three main industry sectors, and two ethnographic case studies of set-building firms.

As Grimshaw and Ravetz show, until recent decades, visual methods have been neglected by anthropologists who privilege a textual approach. However, they argue that there has been a resurgence with such techniques as ethnographic filmmaking.

³ This process was in accordance with the grounded methodology described by Durdella

This signals a change in orientation from “semiotic to more phenomenologically inflected perspectives.”⁴

Visual methods were used in two different ways in the thesis: as illustrations and as part of reflexive production. Reflecting on the experience of seeing things was an important part of the thesis. The work of Birgit Meyer has been central to the analysis. She distinguishes between mental images and material pictures. My own work involved engaging with material pictures of the sets and locations, and reflecting on the mental images that these stimulated. Meyer’s analysis alerted me to the transformations entailed by remediation between the original sets and interiors on the one hand and the printed pictures on the other. The pictures printed in the thesis have not themselves been used as the focus of analysis – rather they largely play an illustrative role to complement the text.

I also shot video myself as part of reflexive production. The immediate reason for taking this role was to get access and video content was seen as potentially valuable to the set company owner. By giving a well-defined role on set it also made me unobtrusive and allowed to look at the activities in a special way. As Grimshaw and Ravetz argue, conducting the research through the eye of the camera positioned me differently in the world. In my case, it enabled and encouraged me to gaze at the practices in a more focused and extended way. Grimshaw and Ravetz draw attention to ethical risks in such an approach. They evoke broadcast television production, in which the filmmaker constructs the narrative from outside the “spaces of intersubjective exchange... [which] raises serious ethical questions about the use and abuse of power, particularly in the context of films made with people whose voices carry little or no weight.”⁵ They contrast this with “observational cinema” which involves the nurturing of an “intersubjective space” between researcher and subject. Through the ethnographic method of embedding myself in the set community prior to filming, I ensured that my practice was in line with this observational cinema approach.

⁴ Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz. “Introduction: Visualizing Anthropology”. In *Visualizing Anthropology*, edited by Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz (Bristol: Intellect, 2005), 4-35 on p14

⁵ Grimshaw and Ravetz, “Introduction”, 17

Data sets

1. *Field notes from ethnographic research.* I made field notes during my whole time in Nigeria, but these were especially important during the ethnographic research with Mr Bedford's leading set-production firm, Leo's set workers at the media company MNET Nigeria, and with the Creative Designers Guild of Nigeria (CDGN).
2. *Videos and Photographs.* I extensively documented the research with filming and photography. This was especially helpful for analysing the specific hand-techniques that the craftsmen employed. The material was also invaluable as an interview prop for generating discussion with interviewees.
3. *Key industry-informants interviews.* They represented a wide range of perspectives across the areas under study. Interviewees included veteran figures with long experience, such as the main location managers in Asaba and Enugu, the leading set designers and the owners of location houses and hotels. The great majority were semi-structured, with a small number being less structured and more exploratory.
4. *Standard interviews.* These included a much larger set of interviews with relevant people in the industries under study, typically younger entrants. These included some semi-structured interviews but included a majority of exploratory ones.
5. *Ad hoc interviews.* On a number of occasions, an unexpected situation presented itself in which I was able to conduct a brief ad hoc interview with a previously unidentified informant. In one case, for example, I had an enlightening interview with a member of staff at a hotel who had experience in the film industry.
6. *Industry analysts.* These included academics and NGO specialists.
7. *Archival evidence.* I made use of newspaper archives of several leading Lagosian newspapers, including *This Day* and the *Guardian*.
7. *Secondary literature.* This is covered in the introduction and theoretical chapters.

Ethical considerations

Throughout the research process, ethics guidelines were followed. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, I participated in the Open University's ethical review process, including completing the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Project Registration and Risk Checklist and the Human Research Ethics (HREC) Proforma. Following this process, I received ethical approval for the research programme, including gathering audio-visual materials from research participants.⁶ In addition, I obtained individual consent from each participant – both for conducting the interviews and for taking photos, videos and recordings of each of them. As part of this ethics process, I prepared an information leaflet and a more detailed frequently-asked-questions sheet. These were given to each research participant prior to interviews or filming. They explained the aims and objectives of the research, the uses of the materials and the rights of the participant.

Ethnographic techniques

The methodology in this section draws inspiration from Karin Barber's approach to studying cultural improvisation in the Yoruba travelling theatre. In this methodology, I was embedded in the set production process. I was embedded in three ways: as an observer, as a participant, and as a reflexive producer.

The observation involved my participation on set:

- In a purely observational capacity, which had the advantage of allowing me to focus fully on understanding the processes going on around me.
- I also researched these processes as a participant, an approach taken by Karin Barber herself and more recently Carmen McCain, who has appeared as an actress in a number of Northern Nigerian movies.⁷ For example, during some of

⁶ This was formally approved in the Memorandum HREC/2015/1937/Bud/1 from the Open University Research Ethics Committee on 5 April 2015.

⁷ Carmen R. McCain, "The Politics of Exposure: Contested Cosmopolitanisms, Revelation of Secrets, and Intermedial Reflexivity in Hausa Popular Expression" (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2014)

the research, I lived on-site with the workers and participated in their daily routine; and on other occasions I joined in with the CDGN's daily functions.

- I myself participated as a “reflexive producer”, a term used by John Caldwell in his book, *Production Culture*.⁸ Reflexive producers include the behind-the-scenes film workers who create their own accounts of the production process and wider culture in which they participate. This can include guild news sheets and behind-the-scenes footage. In my case, I created video footage of the set-production process.

Interview techniques

The semi-structured interviews employed a series of standard questions, labelled the “main questions”, which were asked of every informant in each subject group. In the case of craft workers, for example, these included “What kind of sources do you use as a model for the furnishings you make?.” A second type of question was “the probe”, which was used only when the interviewee's answer is insufficient, and greater depth, more specific evidence, or more relevant direction is required. Finally there were “follow-up” questions which allowed the interviewer to pursue unexpectedly rich answers.⁹ These could include enquiring about contradictions with the answers of other interviewees.

A number of specific qualitative interview techniques were employed. These included triangulation, whereby a range of interviewees were asked about the same subject. For example, in relation to the questions surrounding location filming in houses, I came

⁸ John Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008). For reflections on the role of the ethnographer on the film set, see also: A. Schneider, “Setting up Roots, or the Anthropologist on the Set: Observations on the Shooting of a Cinema Movie in a Mapuche Reservation, Argentina”, *Visualizing Anthropology*, edited by Anna Grimshaw and Amanda Ravetz (Bristol: Intellect, 2005), 111-131

⁹ The division of the questions into the three categories is based on the classification in Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (London: Sage, 2005), 151

across informants who had been involved from both sides, as both house owners and location managers. I interviewed the owner of a house, Benson Okonkwo. Then, during my interview with a location manager, I realized that she had been the location manager for the film that had used Benson's house. This enabled me to develop my questionnaire throughout the data-collection process. Three types of interview props were used: the questionnaire, the thesis information sheet (which I also used to promote the academic credibility of the project); and photographs that I had already taken during the course of the research (see below).

Research and relevant skills that pre-existed the commencement of fieldwork

I carried out extensive preparatory activities in the four years prior to the trip. This included research for my MSc thesis on new markets and distribution models in Nollywood, in which I embedded myself in the London Nollywood community. My very first relationships with Nollywood professionals began at this time. These relationships continued and in some cases I interviewed the same informants in Lagos four years later for the doctoral research. Between the MSc and PhD, I also did a project on Nigerian government intervention in Nollywood, specifically looking at the New Distribution Licensing Framework. This research resulted in my first article, "The End of Nollywood's Guilded Age? Marketers, the state and the struggle for distribution."¹⁰ This later informed my PhD as the Nigerian government's attempt to appropriate the Nollywood concept for national branding led me to think about Nollywood as a cultural brand. In addition, the research prompted me to explore the rise of studio-based production in Nigeria, as this was another key area of government intervention.

In this period, I became regularly involved with the Igbo Cultural Conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and to a lesser degree the Igbo Cultural Support Network and the Edinburgh Nigeria Society. I therefore had some familiarity with the diversity of systems of meaning in Igbo culture and some contacts prior to the start of fieldwork.

¹⁰ Alexander Bud, "The End of Nollywood's Guilded Age? Marketers, the State and the Struggle for Distribution," *Critical African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 91–121.

I also had a number of pre-existing video production skills. During my employment prior to the PhD I was responsible for developing an educational publishing firm's video capability. I made a number of educational documentaries (distributed to schools nationally) and gained experience in filming, editing and encoding. The company also paid for me to take a course with a documentary film maker at Oxford Brookes University. Prior to embarking on the fieldwork, I also attended the two-day course specifically on digital video production for anthropologists and social researchers with filmmaker and editor Mark Saunders.

Time period and research sites

The fieldwork was carried out over a two-year period - from June 2015 to June 2017 – and lasted for 12 months in total. It included four trips to Lagos totalling nine months and three trips to Igboland totalling three months. This involved three primary research sites (Lagos, Asaba/Onitsha and Enugu) and four secondary sites (Accra, Awka, Abiriba and Yenagoa/Port Harcourt).



Fig. 1. Map of research sites

Rationale for choice of field sites and sectors

In order to frame the trans-sectoral complex of consumer-orientated cultural industries, I took Nollywood as the starting point. A wide range of these industries intersect in Nollywood, so it provides a unique window through which to explore them. Consequently, the industrial sectors chosen for analysis were houses and hotels (used as locations); small-scale manufacturing such as carpentry (used for set building); event industries (linked to film awards ceremonies, premieres and set decoration) and promotional marketing industries (linked to set building and special effects).

The research on furniture, sets and promotional installations was concentrated in Lagos. The city was selected because almost every Nigerian television and film studio is located there¹¹ and most promotional installations (such as product launches and trade fair exhibition booths) are also constructed there. The main part of this research involved ethnography, with semi-structured interviews as a supplementary technique.

The research on houses and hotels was primarily conducted in Igboland. Igboland was selected for two reasons: the house-building phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the region; and secondly, its houses and hotels have acted as Nollywood's main shooting locations for the majority of the industry's history. The research methodology was primarily semi-structured interviews, with some ethnographic techniques used as a secondary method.

My sampling technique relied on the snowball sampling methodology. This technique was chosen because it was most suited to the informally structured and porously bounded field of potential informants. The particular sequence of introductions for each of the two main fieldwork sites is described below in the sections, "Research in Lagos" and "Research in Igboland".

Research design rationale

The main research question was broken down into three sub-questions. The first two were addressed through a specific phase of the research methodology, while the third was addressed throughout both parts. The first sub-question, "How have Nollywood

¹¹ with the exception of the state-sponsored Tinapa Studios in Cross River State.

and the Igbo built environment interacted to produce new kinds of scene?” was addressed by the Igboland research phase. Here the focus was on the articulation points between Nollywood and the built environment. My key informants were location managers, as they played the central mediating role between filmmakers and owners of houses and hotels. In addition, I interviewed the owners themselves, the film producers, set designers, architects, the Creative Designers Guild of Nigeria and its members and events decorations people.

The second sub-question, “How have Nigerian techniques of material fabrication developed to produce new styles of furnishings, sets and promotional forms?” was addressed in Lagos research phase. It involved studying the circulation and skill development of fabrication workers and companies. Such roles included furniture carpentry, set building and the design of promotional installations.

The third sub-question, “Overall, has a ‘Nigerian Pastoral’ style begun to emerge and what are its features?” was addressed by discussing the styles revealed in images of sets and houses with the research participants. In addition, it was explored through interviewing house owners about the influences affecting their interior and architectural design decisions. This sub-question was also considered through research in Ghana in order to identify whether the “Nigerian Pastoral” was recognized outside of Nigeria.

Research in Lagos

In the two-year period between June 2015 and June 2017 I had four stretches of research in Lagos, totalling around nine months. When I arrived there for the first time, I stayed with a host family comprised of the newly married couple Taiwo and Banke Lawal. I had been recommended to stay with them by Banke’s sister, Wura Ogunrotimi, the President of the Edinburgh Nigeria Society. Wura had the idea for me to stay with Banke because she had completed a degree in Theatre Arts at the Federal University of Ibadan and was very enthusiastic about the film industry. Banke introduced me to the director Yinka Akombi and the cinematographer Patrick Afun. Yinka and Patrick then helped me to organize interviews with three set designers: Hillary Patricks, Opeyemi Daniel and Bedford Baloebi.

During the interview with Mr Bedford, I got the idea that his workshops could be an excellent place in which to carry out more in-depth ethnographic research. I therefore proposed to him that I would be embedded in his company F4D, and that I would spend much of the time documenting its activities through photos and videos, the footage of which would also be available to him for marketing or any other purpose. Bedford was very agreeable to this suggestion and we arranged that I would spend a few weeks with his company. I would eventually spend four months fully embedded in the company and numerous shorter stays over the next eighteen months.

Over the two weeks following our meeting I prepared my camera set-up, sourcing parts mainly from Lagos, as well as a new lens from London. My first day with the firm was Saturday 11 July 2015. The first month was a particularly busy period because the firm was preparing for the launch of the first show of *Project Fame Season 8* just a month later. *MTN Project Fame West Africa* was Mr Bedford's biggest annual contract. Receiving the bulk of its funding from the mobile telecommunications giant MTN and filmed at Ultima Studios, the reality television show was the most popular programme on Nigerian Television at the time. The show was licensed from the original creators in Spain, and comprised of weekly singing performances and the Project Fame "Academy", in which the contestants would live (filmed twenty-four hours per day by cameras behind "fake mirrors"). During my time with F4D, Mr Bedford's company also made sets for other sponsored reality shows (such as *Knorr Tastequest* and *Airtel Touching Lives*), as well as promotional installations (such as an annual exhibition booth for the Chinese energy company Hexing), commercials (for various large companies including MTN) and one large-scale and loss-making passion-project, the musical extravaganza, *Magic of the Musicals*.

In my daily routine at F4D, I would arrive at the Omole office in the late morning. Whilst waiting for Mr Bedford, I would chat to the design staff in the office and also go across the road to his Omole workshop to talk to the workers there. As soon as Mr Bedford arrived, we would embark on the journey to Ultima Studios on Victoria Island. I would sit at the front with Mr Bedford whilst a few workers who had a special status were allowed to sit in the back. The journeys in the car were an excellent way to get to know Bedford. We would chat about a wide range of topics including his religious beliefs and his church, End Time Ministries; his inspirations from and relationship with

the Nigerian Television industry; and long discussions about the sets that he had designed and which were now being constructed by his workers.

We would arrive at the studio at around lunchtime and I would then set up my cameras and start filming and photographing the set-craftsmen's activities.¹³ Although Mr Bedford turned out not to really have any interest in using the material, it proved to be an excellent way to embark on the research. Through filming, I was able to gain insights into the craft practices that I could not capture through ordinary watching. As a non-professional in fabrication, I initially found it hard to engage with the activities going on. Many techniques, such as attaching an adhesive sheeting or joining the legs of a chair, seemed simultaneously mundane and in some way opaque. By taking photos and videos, I was able to look carefully at the carpenters' zoomed-in hand motions. I would show the images to the set workers and they would explain what was happening and we could also compare one craftsman's technique to another's. The workers liked the videos and photos so much that they were keen to get copies for themselves. I therefore purchased the portable *Canon Selphy* photo-printer so they could have copies of the pictures. Each worker would choose three or four pictures from the printer's tiny screen and everyone would crowd around whilst it imprinted each layer of colour on the paper.



Fig. 2. Mr Bedford's Birthday, surrounded by some of his team.

¹³ As it happens all the craftsmen discussed in the thesis are male, although the term is used in the generic masculine sense.

On the first day that I arrived at Ultima Studios, I had had gone into each room that was being constructed in the Project Fame Academy. When I entered the Academy's bedroom, I noticed that there were mosquito nets over the beds, but had not questioned why they were there so long before the show participants were to arrive. After the first few weeks, one of the workers made an off-the-cuff comment that some of them had been sleeping in that room. During the ensuing discussion, it was revealed that most of the craftsmen were in fact sleeping on-site as Lekki was an unaffordable neighbourhood and it would be too expensive for them to return daily to their homes on the mainland. Whilst some of the higher-status workers slept in the academy bedroom, the others had to stay in the main work-site at the back of the studio. They had already been doing this for two months prior to my arrival and rarely got the chance to return home. They had even used the large dusty building as a church, praying together there for Sunday services.

After finding out that most of the workers stayed on-site, I decided to stay overnight there too on several occasions. By this time, the bedroom was already in use by the show, so I stayed on the worksite at the back. Every night this worksite would transform as the workers would use odd bits of wood to hitch up their mosquito nets over foam mats. The conditions could be slightly harsh as the air was thick with dust and mosquitos came in from the lagoon, sometimes joined by a colony of bats. We would go to sleep at around 01.00 am; then, in the morning foreman Edet would wake everyone up very early - at around 6.30 am - in a rough, somewhat militaristic way.





Fig 3-a and 3-b. Sleeping on-site at Project Fame.

Sharing these experiences with the workers had a great impact on my relationship with them. The in-between periods separating work and bed-time, late at night and early in the morning, might seem mundane but they turned out to be some of the most important. It was during these periods that the workshop would become the place where everyone would shave, eat and wash their clothes and bodies. There was only one pipe on the main worksite that provided all the water for these activities.

It was during this period that I really started to get to know some of the workers, who hadn't been entirely open with me up until then. For example, Mike "Ebuka" Uzoma had previously been friendly but very reticent in his discussions with me. One morning, he suddenly sat down next to me and started showing me photos from an independent film set that he had been working on himself. Unbeknown to both me and many of his colleagues, he had started to apply the skills he had learned with Mr Bedford to other projects, striking out as a set man in his own right. From this time I became friendly with Ebuka and also his close friend Gerald (a general purpose workman who had some managerial potential), as well as the foreman Williams and carpenter Seun.



Fig. 4. Managers (left) and workers (right) at F4D.

Beyond Mr Bedford's company, I carried out many interviews on the topic of sets with other carpenters and set companies in Lagos. The set crew headed by Leo Spartani at the MNET studio in Ikeja was of particular importance. I first met Leo in February 2016 and returned to his studio in April 2017. The studio is important because it hosts the soap-opera *Tinsel*, which is perhaps the most important such show in Nollywood history.¹⁴ The programme was launched in 2008 by a South-African production company and is the only daily studio-shot soap-opera in Nigeria. It was credited by several of my informants as the most significant show in pioneering the glamour style. When I returned to MNET in 2017, I spent about a week with Leo and his set crew, shadowing him, observing their work and conducting a focus group on the topic of packaging.

A further strand of the research was centred around promotional installations. I first became interested in this topic after seeing Mr Bedford's company take on a series of smaller jobs during the "off-season" period after *Project Fame*. These included an exhibition stand and a point-of-sale installation for selling CDs. Soon after, I did an

¹⁴ The term "Nollywood" is used here in accordance with its usage within Nigerian media industries during the period of my fieldwork. It includes activities related to the production and marketing of narrative video content in a broad sense: ranging from television to cinema to DVD and online content. Certainly, the fluid movement of professionals between these areas would support this classification. Additionally, at this time, the word "Nollywood" had attained a degree of international prestige and there was a desire by workers across a wide range of industries to identify with it. This development was reflected in discussions and presentations given at the Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) in November 2015.

interview with Pat Nebo due to his work on large studio sets for the film industry. Surprisingly, the most enlightening part of the interview was that he also engaged in creating promotional installations. His were much more ambitious than Mr Bedford's, including record-breaking towers of bottles. For my last research stint in 2017, I therefore decided to focus more deeply on this topic. This was partly possible due to Mr Bedford's protégé, Williams, independently moving into this area himself, and using several of Bedford's workers. In addition, I did research with the most important pioneer of promotional installations in Nigeria, Theo Lawson. Lawson had started his firm *Total Consults* in the beginning of the 1990s, and his employees had gone on to become key members of the industry, including Femi Dada, Oyoyemi Onokomi and Kingley James.

Igboland research on houses and hotels

I made three journeys to Igboland, between June 2015 and May 2017, totalling around three months.¹⁵ The first was a 10-day trip to Nsukka, in Enugu State, in late-June 2015. During this trip, I conducted interviews at the Theatre Arts department at the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The purpose was partly to develop my understanding of the education system in technical theatre (which contributed to the sets side of the research). More pertinent to the houses and hotels research, the UNN department was a great place to meet students who were already working professionally, many of whom were up-and-coming and well-connected in the entertainment industry. Godwin Praise “Peggy” Ekene - a masters student already working as a dancer, model and events-organiser - was particularly helpful. Peggy arranged for me to do the next stage of the Igboland research with her former classmate, Kennechukwu Okafor, a young filmmaker who had directed the popular Nollywood film, “Dangerous License.”

In mid-December 2015 I returned to Igboland to commence the substantive Igboland fieldwork, assisted by Kennechukwu and staying in his familial village of Umuoji in Anambra State. Umuoji is very close to the twin-city of Asaba-Onitsha¹⁶. This conurbation is of great importance for Nollywood - Asaba is the primary location-shooting site in the whole country, whilst Onitsha is Nollywood’s main marketing centre in the East. From Umuoji, I was able to conduct fieldwork at numerous film locations in Asaba and conducted interviews with the town’s leading location managers, including Chinedu Arinze and Chimeze Bright. We also went to Awka, the Anambra-state capital, where I interviewed Location Manager Piccolo Chidozie Obi, who has played a pioneering role in developing the town as a new location-shooting centre since 2012.

During my stay in Umuoji, I also conducted research on wider Igbo house-building practices. As I was there over Christmas, I was able to attend a number of house-opening ceremonies, which are traditionally held over this period¹⁷. These provided a good opportunity to interview home-owners about their new houses, explore the sociality around house-building and to photographically document the houses’ forms. I attended two house openings in the

¹⁵ “Igboland” is generally associated with a self-consciously ethnically and linguistically defined area. It is generally co-terminous with Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Imo and Ebonyi States, with spill-overs into Delta, Rivers and Akwa Ibom States. Of importance to this study, I carried out research in Asaba, an Igbo-dominated town in Delta State.

¹⁶ separated by the Niger River

¹⁷ This is, in fact, an example of a new tradition.

prosperous home-town of Nnewi¹⁸, as well as three more in Umuoji. In addition to these key-informant interviews, I had several interviews with local people connected with the house industry including architects, architectural draughtsmen and interior-decoration company workers in Onitsha. The detailed photographic documentation that I had made of the Asaba film locations was very useful as a discussion prompt during this set of interviews.

During this trip, I conducted three other strands of research beyond the topic of houses, hotels and location production. These were on areas relevant to the overall thesis and have been included in my final dissertation to varying extents. They included detailed studies of film technical workers in Asaba (“set-and-prop” men and costumiers), events industries and celebrations around Christmas, and a series of interviews with people in the printing and artisanal advertising industries.

I returned to Igboland eighteen months later at midnight on Easter Saturday 2017. After a twelve-hour drive from Lagos, I arrived just in time to attend the wedding of the Onitsha Princess Anyi Magdalene Mbanefo to John Ikechukwu Obi. I had got to know Anyi through the Igbo Cultural Conference in London and it was a great honour to be invited to share in Anyi and John Obi’s joyous day. The event also turned out to be an excellent opportunity to meet the great and the good of Igboland. This included families who owned well established Enugu hotels and also houses used as film locations. Most importantly, I was introduced to the Okeke family, which owned the Zodiac Hotel, a major cultural hub in Igboland in the 1980s and 90s. Tony Okeke, who had founded the hotel in 1979, and his son Buffy, who was now rising up in the family business, became an enormous help in researching the history of Eastern hotels.

Following the wedding of Anyi and John Obi, I took a two-day research break out of Enugu to attend the last night of Passover at the “True God’s Synagogue” (TGS) in nearby Obossi. On arrival at the synagogue, I presented the leader of the congregation, “Prophet Timothy”, with fifteen *haggadot* prayer books sent by Rabbi Danny Rich in London and several other honorary gifts. Prophet Timothy was very grateful for the visit and asked two of his followers, Stephen Ikeogu and Ike Okafor, if they were able to assist me in the research back in Enugu.

After we arrived in Enugu, Stephen took me to meet Victoria Okpara, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Creative Designers Guild of Nigeria (CDGN) Enugu Branch. Prior to my first trip to Nigeria in 2015, I had seen references to this organization and had planned to study it. However, the set professionals I had spoken to in Lagos and Asaba assured me that either it

¹⁸ Nnewi is, alongside Abiriba in Abia State, considered to be the richest hometown in the whole of Igboland.

did not exist or that it was dormant. I had therefore removed it from the research schedule and forgotten about it. Whilst it was true that the guild played a very limited role in most cities, in Enugu it turned out to hold great power. It was compulsory for anyone practising its listed professions to be a member of the guild.¹⁹ Participation was carefully regulated, with productions halted by guild enforcers if non-guilded location managers are caught.²⁰ The CDGN was in fact one of seven associated guilds that represented production workers, including: the Directors Guild of Nigeria (DGN), the Nigerian Society of Cinematographers (NSC), the Association of Movie Producers (AMP), the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN), the Script Writers Guild of Nigerian (SWG N) and the Nigerian Society of Editors (NSE).

The CDGN Enugu Branch was first established in 1996 by twelve founding members, with Peters Udegbulam as the first chairman. CDGN membership was compulsory in Enugu for hair and makeup artists, costumiers, set-and-prop men, location managers and events decorations experts. The guild's wide coverage mirrored my own research parameters as it crossed standard industry categories (events decorations people were outside the film industry, and location managers were not part of creative design).

The CDGN was very helpful and encouraging to me during my time in Enugu. They allowed me to join them in their day-to-day activities over a period of two weeks. I followed the Chairman Mrs Princess Ugo and Treasurer/Secretary Victoria as they engaged in a variety of activities, including guild training sessions (in glamour makeup and epic costuming), advocacy (defending a guild member who had been arrested for possession of gun for prop purposes), courtesy visits for funding their projects (an award ceremony and a film) and their monthly meeting.

The guild also provided crucial connections to a variety of key-informants, including set-and-prop men, location managers and hoteliers. When I first met Victoria, she had produced the official list of the names and addresses of all creative production workers licensed to work in Enugu. Using this as a basis, she proceeded to introduce me to a large number of these CDGN members for interviews. Typically I would travel with her and Stephen (from the TGS), who helped by taking photographs. In this way, I interviewed three of the four leading location

¹⁹ In Asaba, the guild does not include location managers, whilst the entire guild is fairly inactive in Lagos. For Lagos, see discussions with Location Manager Remi; for Asaba, see Creative Designer Guild Chairman Princess.

²⁰ Chairman of the Creative Designers' Guild Princess strictly enforced this system. In one case, an unregistered location manager tried to film a production at Beyond Hotels in Enugu. She arrived with guild enforcers, who halted the production with the threat of a fine of N5000 plus a registration fee of N15,000 (rather than the normal N10,000, resulting an effective 100% penalty of N10,000). In the event, the producer agreed not to use the unregistered location manager.

managers in Enugu (Mrs. Chiamaka Jonas Okori, Mrs Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu and Mrs Toni Ikechi) as well as the most well established set-and-prop men (Sele O Sele, Gabriel Gabazzini Okorie and Jude Odoh and Peters Udegbulam) as well as numerous newer entrants. Through her long experience as a Nollywood make-up artist, Victoria was also familiar with the owners and managers of many of the hotels used for filming and lodging film crews so she introduced me to a number of the key figures (including the managers/owner of the D'King's Planet Suites, the Media Hotel, Afobi Afrika and Beyond Hotel.)



Fig 5. After an interview with Jude Odoh, accompanied by Victoria Okpara and one of Jude's props.

During one of the training sessions at the CDGN, the class was led by an actor called Daniel Ene. After the session Daniel revealed that he came from the town of Abiriba in Abia State, also in Igboland. I had been trying to plan a trip to Abiriba for several weeks because, alongside Nnewi, it was considered the richest village in Igboland and as displaying one of the best cases of the Igbo house-building phenomenon. However, the vast majority of the people who had been so helpful in Enugu were very fearful about Abiriba due to its reputation for cannibalism and *ogwu-ego* (blood-money) rituals. Mr Ene, on the other hand, was very proud of his hometown and offered to show me around the town.

On 24 May 2017, we therefore embarked on a brief trip to Abiriba. On the morning of the trip, the few people who had arranged to accompany us had called in apparently sick, leaving just me, Daniel and the driver Emmanuel. We therefore embarked on the 90-minute trip to Abiriba where Daniel showed us every notable house in the city and I was able to document the town photographically. We were easily able to find the houses of filmmakers through the Nollywood posters they had adorning their walls. At one house we met a queen of Abiriba, who insisted that she take us to meet the Enachioken (or King). Although it was a trial day at the palace, the

King received us warmly - providing us with an official history of the town and a list of the oldest buildings for us to see.

Research on other sites.

Before returning to Igboland in 2017, I had been curious about an event held in Yenagoa, the Miss Nollywood Beauty Pageant. The pageant seemed interesting because it apparently had only tangential connections to the film industry itself. It therefore seemed it could represent a case of the Nollywood imaginary becoming something in its own right, beyond the realm of film production and spectatorship. Whilst in Enugu, I met an actor named Chris Bassey who had previously lived in Yenagoa. He knew the manager of the most well known Miss Nollywood winner, Queen Princess Tyra Adaeze. Princess had had a very high-profile fight with the owner of Miss Nollywood, Bara Solomon Adede, which had launched them both to stardom. Partly due to the disagreement, all parties were very hesitant about meeting me, but Princess finally agreed to meet me in Port Harcourt during my last week in Nigeria. I therefore hurriedly made my way to the Niger Delta and met her there. The next day we travelled together to Yenagoa to meet her manager Robynz Gawa so we could discuss the pageant in more detail, and to see the location where it took place.

Research carried out that has not been directly drawn upon in the thesis

There were also five further strands of research, which although I have not directly drawn from in the argument, are still important in understanding the wider “trans-sectoral complex” of cultural consumer-orientated industries.

Events industries

I conducted very in-depth research into event industries in Lagos and Igboland. It included public events such as awards ceremonies, concerts, beauty pageants and church events; and private events like weddings and birthdays. These events involved the co-ordination of stage construction, lighting, sound, catering, red carpets, videography, backdrops for press-photo opportunities and comedy and musical sideshows.

Printing and artisanal advertising industries

Extensive research was conducted on the printing and artisanal advertising industries in Onitsha and Lagos. In Onitsha, I introduced myself directly to all of the main printing companies and carried out interviews on the rise of promotional printed forms, especially advertising posters. At different points in time, Nollywood was an important customer of these companies, as well as corporate actors (especially cigarette and brewing companies), churches, political parties and people advertising funerals.

Theatre Arts Department at the University Of Nigeria

I spent ten days at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka in June 2015. I presented a paper at a conference at the Faculty of Arts and also conducted in-depth research with the students and staff at the Theatre Arts department. I focused on those members involved in technical aspects, including set design, costuming, hair and makeup and cinematography. Many of the students were already working professionally on the side. This research illuminated the trend towards professionalization in the theatre and film industries.

Tailoring and garments research

I conducted significant research on the garment and tailoring industries and on costuming in the film industry. This research has many parallels with the furnishings that became a more central focus.

Ghana

I carried out ten days of research in Accra in order to understand how the idea of the Nigerian Pastoral was developing in another West-African country. My main methodology was to go to tailor, seamstress and fabric market stalls and shops in the market and to ask how customers indicated the types of styles they would like for their clothes (e.g. whether they brought pictures from Nigerian catalogues or Nollywood movies). I also did a smaller amount of research on other styles that were perceived as Nigerian, including tattoos and certain types of home furnishing.

Researcher positionality

Amongst the participants in my research, there was a feeling of neglect, from the Nigerian government, industry associations and the public more generally. At the same time, interviewees were unaccustomed to seeing Western researchers and had a great concern for their safety and welfare. I received a positive and welcoming response from a wide variety of participants who saw the research as a valuable and serious opportunities for recognition and sharing their views. On several occasions, interviewees finished the interview by bemoaning that there were no awards ceremonies for their particular trades and that the interview had given them a sense of pride.

Part 1: Communities and Clusters

Chapter 3. Theories of Communities and Clusters

Introduction: Chapter 3

Chapters three and four address the research sub-question, “How have Nollywood and the Igbo built environment interacted to produce new kinds of scene?” The function of chapter three is to provide a theoretical introduction to the argument, which is explored empirically in chapter four. It locates the role of house building within the African industrialization literature as well as outlining the history of houses and hotels in Igboland as a key form of consumption. It then introduces the distinction between creative-industry clusters and experience-economy “scenes.” The former are characterized by economic inputs and outputs, whilst the latter are distinguished by aesthetics or moods. These are classified according to “the aesthetic of money-authentication, money-making and money-protection”. In conclusion, the chapter sets out a framework for exploring the interaction of the house scene and film-production cluster.

Property and manufacturing in histories of African Capitalism

In their recent article, “Clientelism, Rents and Accumulation as Drivers of Capitalist Transformation”, Gray and Whitfield argue that to the detriment of “productive sectors” like manufacturing, African capitalists have focused their resources on houses and hotels, amongst a few other areas.¹ In order to explore this phenomenon, they invoke an earlier generation of industrialization scholars, including John Iliffe and Paul Kennedy, calling for a return to studying “businesses, firms, domestic capitalist classes, productive sectors and industrial policies.”²

The work of these earlier scholars appears to provide a foundation for Gray and Whitfield’s thesis. Iliffe argued powerfully that African businessmen’s propensity to invest profits in property rather than capital equipment had promoted “rentier” rather than “productive” activity. Adopting a term of Braudel, he describes this propensity as “the treason of the

¹ These include “low-risk and low entry-barrier” sectors: wholesale and retail trade, transport, and “economic activities geared towards the domestic market, such as telecommunications and banking.” Hazel Gray and Lindsay Whitfield, “Reframing African Political Economy: Clientelism, Rents and Accumulation as Drivers of Capitalist Transformation,” Working paper (International Development LSE, October 2014), <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/home.aspx>.

² Gray and Whitfield, “Reframing African Political Economy”, 28

bourgeoisie”,³ and suggested that this was not just an African phenomenon but had been a counter to growth in the global history of industrialization.⁴

This perspective came with the support of a number of country case-studies. A particularly thorough investigation was conducted by Paul Kennedy with manufacturers in a large cross-section of industries in Southern Ghana in 1967-70.⁵ He carried out a quantitative analysis, discovering that the less successful firm owners had a far higher average ratio of house-to-machinery investment (1:2.18) than the successful businessmen. (1:0.90).⁶ Similar conclusions were found in differing contexts by Samir Amin in Ivory Coast and Sara Berry in south-west Nigeria.⁷ Whilst Iliffe, Kennedy and Amin considered urban real estate as “rentier” activities, Berry saw rural property investment as more akin to conspicuous consumption, as part of a quest for “seniority”;⁸ but the conclusion was similar: the practice was inimical to productive transformation.

³ John Iliffe, *Emergence of African Capitalism* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 69

⁴ Iliffe does qualify his argument, accepting that such investments could be productive to some extent (especially through their linkages to the construction industry). However, he still emphasizes that they were largely rentier in nature, rather than productive.

⁵ Paul T. Kennedy, *Ghanaian Businessmen: From Artisan to Capitalist Entrepreneur in a Dependent Economy* (Ifo-Forschungsberichte für Wirtschaftsforschung, Abteilung Entwicklungsländer, 1980)

⁶ Kennedy, *Ghanaian Businessmen*, 103-105

⁷ Samir Amin, *Le Développement du capitalisme en Côte d'Ivoire* (Paris: les Éditions de Minuit, 1967); Sara Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons: Accumulation, Mobility, and Class Formation in an Extended Yoruba Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). It should be noted that whilst Iliffe and Amin are focused on property as an investment for the derivation of rents, Berry considers property that was not directly for business purposes but rather contributed to a sense of “seniority” of the owner. This distinction represents the difference between urban rental properties and the home-town properties that Berry was studying. The houses in Kennedy’s study fall somewhere between the two: they were urban properties that were sometimes rented out, but were not seen as particularly profitable.

⁸ Berry, *Fathers Work for Their Sons*, 64-68

A sketch of property-building in Igboland

House building in Igboland's "rural towns"

The West-African house-building phenomenon acknowledged in an earlier era by Kennedy, Amin and Berry has perhaps reached its apotheosis in Igboland in the last 40 years.

In the Igbo popular narrative, the development is closely bound up with the events and aftermath of the Biafran War (1967-1970). Before the war, many Igbo families had lived in other parts of Nigeria and had built homes in such towns as Lagos, Kaduna and Port Harcourt, in addition to residences in their own villages.⁹ Following the start of pogroms in May 1966, many people fled back to Igboland. This immediately caused a housing crisis as some did not have their own village houses and had to share in cramped and stressful conditions with relatives¹⁰, whilst others had lost contact with their hometowns altogether and did not know where to go.¹¹

When the war ended in January 1970, many families who had previously owned property outside Igboland were left with almost nothing. Those who had lost their bank deposits and properties were issued a flat-rate compensation of just £20. Properties that had been owned by Igbos before the war were seized by local people or the federal government. A particularly notorious case was the appropriation of much Igbo property in Port Harcourt, which received legal sanction through the Abandoned Property Degree.¹² Such experiences contributed to the popular belief that, "no one can make that mistake [building outside Igboland] again."¹³

⁹ Daniel Jordan Smith, "Legacies of Biafra: Marriage, 'Home People' and Reproduction among the Igbo of Nigeria," *Africa* 75, no. 1 (2005): 30–45; Ola Uduku, "The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s," *Habitat International* 20, no. 2 (1996): 191–202

¹⁰ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹¹ Uduku, "The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s"

¹² Daniel Jordan Smith, *To Be a Man Is Not a One-Day Job: Masculinity, Money, and Intimacy in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 38; see also Barth Chukwuezi, "Through Thick and Thin: Igbo Rural-Urban Circularity, Identity and Investment," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 19, no. 1 (2001): 55–66

¹³ Daniel Jordan Smith, "Legacies of Biafra", p. 38. A similar sentiment was expressed by my Informant, Buffy: "so everyone just thought, whatever you accumulate, go back home, build a home, build a house in your village because the last time you went out and built, it was taken and you were left with nothing."

At the conclusion of the war, the Biafran economy was left devastated. Aspiring entrepreneurs were forced to re-disperse from their hometowns¹⁴ to Igbo commercial centres like Aba, to other Nigeria cities like Lagos, and to foreign trading hubs, such as the ports of Lome and Cotonou.¹⁵ In the first years, in the 1970s, most of the entrepreneurs had to struggle, just getting “biscuit or square meal”¹⁶ was a luxury as they had lost their dominant trading positions and were forced to do the “odd jobs that their fellow countrymen no longer wanted to do.”¹⁷

By the 1980s, these businesses had started to recover but this time, unlike before the war, the accumulated wealth was sent back to build houses at home.¹⁸ Whilst a portion was contributed to communal rebuilding schemes, the great bulk was concentrated on building up the private property of each man’s own family.¹⁹ It became common for these wandering Igbos to live in tiny one-bedroom flats as their primary residence whilst spending greater sums on houses back in the village.²⁰ From the late 1990s, the amounts spent on these houses skyrocketed, regularly reaching hundreds of millions of Naira²¹, and with the style becoming more grandiose.²² Additionally, whereas previously an elder brother might build a block of flats to house his extended family, he would now build houses for them too.²³ The social pressure to engage in these practices is huge, reflected in such popular aphorisms as “Akurou ulo, amara

¹⁴ In the eyes of hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017, they turned into a wandering people: “they became the Jews.”

¹⁵ see Tom Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), on movements to Aba, Lome and Cotonou; also, hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017: to “Ghana, Libya, South Africa, UK...”

¹⁶ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹⁷ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹⁸ Interviews with Judge Peter Eze, 29 December 2015; house owner Alex Egbonike, 3 January 2016

¹⁹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017. In his words this type of self-sufficiency was “when you get the Igbo man at his best.” He also emphasised that the benefit was also for the future generations of the family.

²⁰ Also see Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s” on this trend.

²¹ Interview with business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017 - with reference to a contemporary example of a friend who has a tiny flat in Abuja. A similar example was given by Architect Ifanyi Ene (interview 22 December 2015).

²² Interviews with Judge Peter Eze, 29 December 2015; house owner Alex Egbonike, 3 January 2016

²³ Interview with Judge Peter Eze, 29 December 2015

onye kpatara ya” (“When your wealth reaches home, we know the bread behind it.”)²⁴

Geographers such as Ben Page and Emile Sunjo have also emphasized the plethora of more practical explanations for village house building, such as primary residential, retirement or holidays homes.²⁵

This Igbo home-town house-building phenomenon has transformed the landscape: a unique settlement pattern, somewhere between urban and rural, has been created, described as “rural towns” by Barth Chukwuezi.²⁶ On the one hand, the new houses are of an urban style and have appliances such as gas stoves, refrigerators and air conditioners. There are usually some village amenities²⁷ - such as bore-hole water supplies and meeting buildings.²⁸ They are also sometimes part of fairly continuous conurbations, encompassing stretches of cities and hometowns. On the other hand, they also have rural characteristics: there are many interspersed small concrete houses typical of Nigerian villages, and they tend to have few services, limited tarmacked roads, and no central business districts. These juxtapositions give the settlements a patchwork or “mixed” character²⁹.

When I first stayed in one such settlement, in Umuoji in Anambra State, the experience of this patchwork was vertigo-inducing. On my arrival in the village, I was invited to the hut of a very old lady. We sat on the earthen floor, just in front of her traditional stove alongside her small village house, when she asked me if I would like to take a photo. I looked around in the darkness unsure what exactly I was supposed to take a photo of. Suddenly she flipped a switch, illuminating just behind me a splendid mansion with huge double columns, all in salmon pink! “That’s my son’s house; he’s a priest.” the woman said proudly. In my diary, I described the sensation of this setting as, “a psychedelic Alice-In-Wonderland place.”

Certain home-town villages have developed to such an extent that they are losing their “mixed” character and are reaching comprehensive gentrification (in respect of houses if not

²⁴ Interview with architect Ifanyi Ene, 22 December 2015; also see Chukwuenzi, “Through Thick and Thin.”

²⁵ Ben Page and Emile Sunjo, “Africa’s middle class: building houses and constructing identities in the small town of Buea, Cameroon” *Urban Geography*, 39, no. 1 (2018): 75-103.

²⁶ Barth Chukwuezi, “Through Thick and Thin: Igbo Rural-Urban Circularity, Identity and Investment,” *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 19, no. 1 (2001): 55–66. See pp. 60-61.

²⁷ Through the home-town association and “age grade” systems - see Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s”; also hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017.

²⁸ Chukwuezi, “Through Thick and Thin”; Chief Tony; my field notes from Umuoji, Abiriba.

²⁹ On this “mixed” character see Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s.”

infrastructure). The indigenes of these villages have specialized in specific industries, resulting in the accumulation of extraordinary wealth. Nnewi, in Anambra State, has found success in the manufacture of auto-parts³⁰, whilst the people of Awka-Etiti (also in Anambra) have succeeded in the trade and manufacture of bicycles and parts for other vehicles³¹ and the Item people in Abia State have specialised in the manufacture and trade of singlets and trade in second-hand garments.³²

The apogee of this trend can be seen in the case of Abiriba in the Old Bende region of Abia State.³³ Abiribans have long been merchants, in recent decades specializing in the trade of cloth and second-hand garments, and in a range of manufacturing activities in Aba.³⁴ The town is known by its moniker “Little London”³⁵, in reference to its extraordinary level of development.

I visited Little London in May 2017, and was struck by the rows of mansions lining the streets. There is huge creative variation between the houses: unlike in the state capitals, where there is some neighbourhood pressure towards conformity, in Abiriba it is expected that the homeowner “leaves his personality imprinted on the architectural design, and the building has to be the first of its kind in the community.”³⁶ Locally they are strongly identified as *Ogwu-Ego* (Blood Money) houses. As there was no special holiday at the time of my stay, the village was almost completely empty and had the air of a ghost town.

³⁰Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 162; Chukwuezi, “Through thick and thin”

³¹ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 152.

³² Meagher, *Identity Economics*, 60-61.

³³ It has been argued by Tom Forrest that there are in fact two divergent home-town development trends in Igboland. See Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 145-196. There is a distinction between home-towns like Nnewi, where indigenes locate their industry in their towns, and those like Abiriba where the businesses are located elsewhere. Both these trends still exist, although the first is perhaps less prevalent now with the decline of Igbo manufacturing since Forrest’s time.

³⁴ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 174-184; Meagher, *Identity Economics*, 73-76

³⁵ The story of how Abiriba came to be called “Little London” was related to me during an audience with the king of Abiriba, His Royal Highness Enachioken U.O. Ukiwo. In this account Nnamdi Azikiwe, the then Secretary General of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, visited Abiriba in 1947. He was so impressed with the condition of the town, and especially its modern flush-toilets, that he named it “Little London.” Also see Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 176-177.

³⁶ Ebere Ahanihu, “Abiriba And Ohafia: Two Of A Kind”, Nairaland Forum, 30 April 2011 <https://www.nairaland.com/657067/abiriba-ohafia-two-kind>, accessed September 2018



Fig. 1: A street in Abiriba, May 2017.

The buildings have grandiose features, with elaborate column-pediment structures and front balconies. There has been particular innovation in column forms, with circular, square and triangular; thin and thick; and single, double and triple combinations all employed.³⁷ The large scale of the houses conveys a sense of awe, with the capacity to “bamboozle whoever [the owner] was inviting.”³⁸

Some of the architecture appears to have been influenced by a range of foreign media imageries, or a “Los Angeles Style”³⁹. One older house combines “boat architecture” with a Star-Trek aesthetic; another has a pyramid-UFO style; whilst a newer mansion has a large gate-house in the form of a Babylonian or Trojan fortified entrance. The buildings are also adorned with many plaster or concrete reliefs and statuettes, usually depicting locally-inspired subjects such as lions, elephants and crocodiles.

Beyond its mansions, Little London is marked by the fruits of a large number of community projects funded by the town’s age grades. These age grades compete against each other in a co-ordinated way under the oversight of the Abiriba Communal Improvement Union.⁴⁰ Public artworks are particularly prominent, including large statues of an elephant, a candle, a hunter

³⁷ Interview house owner Alex Egbonike, 3 January 2016

³⁸ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

³⁹ Ola Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s,” *Habitat International* 20, no. 2 (1996): 191–202. See p.201

⁴⁰ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 176-179; Ahanihu, “Abiriba And Ohafia”

and a titled man presenting a yam. Other achievements for which the age grades are responsible include public facilities such as a meetings building, a town hall, a post office, and a local electricity grid.⁴¹



Fig. 2. Public Artwork in Abiriba A.



Fig. 3. Public Artwork in Abiriba B.

Urban property development in Igboland

As “rural towns” were given priority for property investment after the war, the redevelopment of Igbo cities took longer to begin.⁴² A strong impetus for this did soon come with changes in regional state organization. Until 1976, Enugu had been the administrative capital of almost the entirety of Igboland. However, from this time, new state capitals were created in successive waves. These included Owerri as capital of Imo State in 1976, and then Awka as capital of Anambra State, Asaba as capital of Delta State, Umuahia as capital of Abia State (all 1991), and finally Abakaliki was added as the capital of Ebonyi State in 1996.⁴³

⁴¹ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 178; Ahanihu, , “Abiriba And Ohafia”

⁴² Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s”, 194

State-capital status brought a great boost to these cities. Government and civil service infrastructure sprouted, including new housing estates for the legislators in the state houses of assembly, party stakeholders, government permanent secretaries and appointees and other lower-ranked civil servants.⁴⁴ All of the new state capitals also gained universities/polytechnics - Owerri now has four⁴⁵; as well as state-television stations; and Owerri and Asaba also added airports in 1994 and 2011 respectively. Even Enugu, to some extent a loser from this process of state fragmentation⁴⁶, benefitted from the ever-increasing sums distributed through its state-capital machinery.

The new housing stock built in these cities was initially relatively modest. Owerri's new estates consisted of bungalows and two to three-bedroom apartments.⁴⁷ Even in Enugu, elites generally resisted building great mansions, preferring to invest in property for rental.⁴⁸ Since the late 1990s, however, this has changed - especially in the Government Reserved Areas (GRAs)⁴⁹ of the wealthiest capitals of Enugu, Owerri and Asaba. Members of the secretariat, such as the governor, state party chairmen, state-government secretaries and commissioners can now afford to build a mansion in the GRA as well as in the village.

The period since the start of the 1980s has also seen two huge booms in hotel construction in Igbo cities, where they had hitherto been rare. As the oldest state capital, Enugu has been somewhat ahead of the other cities, closely followed by Owerri. In 1979 Enugu had one large government-owned hotel - the Presidential; a dilapidated colonial club house - the Kettering; a couple of privately-owned hotels - notably the Hotel Metropole; as well as a number of small family-run guest houses that were not considered professional enterprises.⁵⁰

By the mid-1990s the hotel landscape had transformed. The Zodiac Hotel, opened in Enugu in June 1979 played an important role in this development. The hotel was strongly influenced by the experience of its founder, Chief Anthony Okeke ("Chief Tony"), who had been studying in

⁴⁴ Uduku, "The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s", 194

⁴⁵ Owerri has a state university (Imo State University) and polytechnic (Imo State Polytechnic Umuagwo), and a federal university (Federal University of Technology) and polytechnic (Federal Polytechnic, Nekede).

⁴⁶ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

⁴⁷ Uduku, "The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s", 194

⁴⁸ Interview with Judge Peter Eze, 29 December 2015

⁴⁹ Interview with Judge Peter Eze, 29 December 2015

⁵⁰ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi 2 May 2017; Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

Houston. He was inspired by the booming American motel industry.⁵¹ The Zodiac was designed for busy people on short stays, but had some added luxuries such as a bar, restaurant and casino, in addition to a great deal of modern technology, including colour televisions and refrigerators in each room and later was the first regional hotel to have fax, telex and satellite television.⁵²

The Zodiac Hotel achieved instant success, and by the early 1980s there were already several other new hotels of a comparable standard, including the Nike Lake and the Gemini Inn. This trend continued at a rapid pace. According to a study carried out by Chief Tony, (as an early feasibility study for the 2009 Under-17 World Cup) there were 50 hotels in Enugu by 1985, rising to over 60 by the end of the decade.⁵³ After a crash in the early-mid 1990s, there was a second boom from around 1999 onwards. The number of hotels again mushroomed and the average daily guest numbers city-wide rose substantially, from 200 in the 1985 survey to nearly 1000 in a second study conducted for FIFA in the late 90s.

Starting somewhat later than Enugu, Owerri has experienced a hotel boom following a similar pattern. The early 80s saw the creation of the Concorde Hotel by the state government⁵⁴ and the establishment of Modotels by another visionary businessman, Dr Alex Ekwueme.⁵⁵ By some estimates, Owerri has now even surpassed Enugu as the most hotel-rich city in Igboland.⁵⁶ After Enugu and Owerri, Asaba has also developed a high concentration of hotels in more recent years. These Asaban hotels tend to be of a small to medium-size, with the exception of the Grand Hotel, opened in 2002.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Such as Ramada Inns and Holiday Inn

⁵² Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

⁵³ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

⁵⁴ Luke Onyekakeyah, "Owerri, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," *The Guardian (Nigeria)*, October 17, 2017; Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi 2 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; according to Professor Sam-Amobi, Modotels housed the first hotel casino in the region.

⁵⁵ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 260; Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017

⁵⁶ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017

⁵⁷ Interviews with business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; "Obasanjo opens Grand Hotel" *Vanguard* 1 February 2002.

The hotels provide three main services: accommodation, stages for events and social spaces. As stages for events⁵⁸, medium and large-scale hotels include event halls for family occasions including wedding receptions, child dedications, birthday parties and burial events. They are also used for entertainment events, especially beauty pageants;⁵⁹ for awards events, such as for companies or the film industry; for church events, including fellowships, celebrations and festivals⁶⁰ and for conferences/meetings of banks and other businesses, parastatals and churches.⁶¹

⁵⁸ In his interview Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017, listed the Toscana, Golden Royale, Nondon and Ascot as the prime hotel event venues in 2017.

⁵⁹ In Enugu these include Miss Coal City and Miss Ada Igbo, interview Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017.

⁶⁰ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; hotel manager Mrs Julie Obiagele Okenwa, 16 May 2017

⁶¹ In her interview hotel manager Mrs Julie Obiagele Okenwa, 16 May 2017, mentioned Redeemed, Winners, Welwyn Women, Scripture Union, Grail Message.

Theoretical Framework

In order to analyse this assemblage of houses and filmmaking, I draw a distinction between creative industries clusters and experience economy 'scenes',⁶² whilst also outlining a mechanism through which these articulate with each other. In constructing this interpretive framework, I have been inspired by the work of Olivier Crevoisier and his pupil Hugues Jeannerat at the department of Regional Development at the University of Neuchâtel in Switzerland.⁶³ They have made advances in this area through a long-term study of the watch-making industry in the Swiss Jura Arc.

Creative Industries Clusters

The creative industries concept (in its regional studies iteration) is similar to a traditional Territorial Innovation Model (TIM). In such a model, local production systems are able to compete in globalized markets due to the increased mobility of production factors, goods and services. The associated spatial form is understood to be the "locus where a particular production system anchors itself"⁶⁴. These have variously been conceptualized as clusters, industrial districts or innovative milieus. In such a system, there is usually a local-production to global-supply dynamic, with the focus on export-based manufacturing industries.

In this model, buyers and sellers are very much distinct and their relationship is somewhat distant. Sellers are *producers* who combine production factors to create a product defined through its assigned use and market niche. On their part, buyers are *users* who evaluate the products' use values. Buyers are not primarily interested in the identity of the seller, and marketing strategies are focused on differentiating the product's attributes, rather than those of the sellers. This type of system is geared towards organizing the *ex ante* qualification of the product - its characteristics are pre-determined before purchase.

In the original concept of Territorial Innovation Models, technological innovation was seen as the main driver of product and process upgrading. The creative industries concept modified this by replacing technology with cultural or creative inputs as the key production factor. It was

⁶² Whilst I present "creative industries" in a way very faithful to Jeannerat's original formulation, the discussion of "experience economy" constitutes my own rendering.

⁶³ Anne Lorentzen and Hugues Jeannerat, "Urban and Regional Studies in the Experience Economy: What Kind of Turn?," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 4 (2013): 363–369.

⁶⁴ Hugues Jeannerat, "Staging Experience, Valuing Authenticity: Towards a Market Perspective on Territorial Development," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 4 (2013): 370–384, see p.375.

in this vein that the economist Richard Caves argued that creative (as opposed to “humdrum”) inputs were the defining feature of creative industries.⁶⁵ Similarly, Peter Hall in *Cities in Civilization* argued that local cultural milieus are the drivers of innovations in such sectors as the film, publishing or music.⁶⁶ In the case of Igboland, the cultural milieu has fuelled the rise of events decorators for a plethora of celebrations and festivals. These creative workers have reapplied their skills in set decoration and construction. Notwithstanding these modifications, the overall “productionist” ethos of the approach means that it retains much continuity with the original TIM formulation.

Experience Economy Scenes

In contrast to “creative industries”, the experience economy approach emphasises consumption as the key driver of innovation. It analyses regional development “not only through the spatial organization of production, but also through the spatial contextualization of consumption.” Instead of such concepts as clusters and industrial districts, it employs the notion of the “scene” to explore these performative compositions. Scenes are evoked in a double sense. The first is in the register of the theatrical performance, as popularized by Pine and Gilmore in *Experience Economy: Work is theatre and every business a stage*⁶⁷ and in more depth by members of the Institute for Creative Industries and Innovation at the Queensland University of Technology. Paul Makeham, for example, invokes Lewis Mumford’s description of the urban economy as “a stage-set, well designed”, and argues that “theatricality is intrinsic to urban life.”⁶⁸ The second is in the sense of “the music scene.” In this sense, a scene comprises a community of people who share styles and sensibilities, who often live in specific neighbourhoods and who convene around particular consumption patterns tied to specific genres of cultural performance.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Richard E. Caves, *Creative Industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

⁶⁶ Peter Hall, *Cities in Civilization* (New York: Pantheon, 1998)

⁶⁷ Buddie Joseph Pine and James H Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage* (Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Paul Makeham, “Performing the City,” *Theatre Research International* 30, no. 2 (2005): 150–160. Lewis Mumford, “What Is a City,” *Architectural Record* 82, no. 5 (1937): 59–62. Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938).

⁶⁹ Emma Baulch, *Making Scenes: Reggae, Punk, and Death Metal in 1990s Bali* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007) ; Daniel Silver, Terry Nichols Clark, and Clemente Jesus Navarro

The experience economy concept of “scenes” comprises a set of elements that together make up the staging or landscape of consumption. These elements are sociable consumption (including cultural events, amenities and retail and leisure spaces); at-home consumption and residential accommodation; and reflexive image-making. Goods are not primarily identified as economic outputs. Instead they are seen as props that contribute to the local staging of consumption.

Whilst the creative economy approach tends to emphasize industries that produce “footloose” (using Lorentzen’s terminology) mobile products,⁷¹ the experience economy approach is more focused on “non-footloose” sectors, in which the product is consumed at the site of production. Competitiveness in this approach is therefore not based on the mobility of products, but on the mobility of consumers who come into the scenes as visitors or residents. The visitor-based sectors include tourism spaces, museums and cultural events. Meanwhile the resident-based industries include retail and some forms of leisure and entertainment. Regarding the latter, the ‘creative city’ pioneer Charles Landry has argued that these scenes represent a “rapprochement between everyday living, consumption and spectacle.... turning retailing into part of the entertainment industry, blurring boundaries between shopping and the experience of culture.”⁷²

An especially important part of these landscapes are houses, which constitute consumption stages *par excellence* - as long-argued by historians of consumption⁷³. In an early contribution to this literature, Sharon Zukin explored the development of loft houses in Manhattan in her 1982 monograph *Loft Living*⁷⁴. Zukin discusses how, in the late 1970s, a group of artists and other cultural producers replaced manufacturers in the loft apartments.⁷⁵ The cultural

Yanez, “Scenes: Social Context in an Age of Contingency,” *Social Forces* 88, no. 5 (2010): 2293–2324.

⁷¹ Anne Lorentzen, “Cities in the Experience Economy,” in *The City in the Experience Economy: Role and Transformation*, ed. Anne Lorentzen and Carsten Jahn Hansen (London: Routledge, 2013), 13–31.

⁷² Charles Landry, “Tapping the Potential of Neighbourhoods: The Power of Culture and Creativity”, paper presented at the International Conference on Revitalizing Urban Neighbourhoods, Copenhagen, 5–7 September 2001. Quoted in Makeham, Paul. “Performing the City”, 151.

⁷³ “The domestic sphere as *the* quintessential space of consumption, a material haven managed by the housewife and wanting to be filled with possessions, new technologies and leisure activities.” Frank Trentmann, *Empire of Things: How We Became a World of Consumers, from the Fifteenth Century to the Twenty-First* (London: Penguin, 2016), 223

⁷⁴ Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Rutgers University Press, 1989).

⁷⁵ These included craft workers, performers, photographers and carpenters, Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, 6.

workers refurbished the loft-houses and led exciting, bohemian lifestyles in them, as featured in many media pieces at the time, helping to transform the SoHo neighbourhood into a fashionable scene. Wealthy, middle class consumers soon priced out the cultural workers as the loft houses became ideal consumption venues and the value of the “loft scene” was increasingly expressed in real estate prices.

Reflexive mediation-images/cultural branding (cultural events-spectacles)

The conception of scenes as performative compositions also entails an emphasis on image-making and reflexive mediation in which images of the scene are produced and incorporated within itself. The merging together of the mediations with the other elements (i.e. sociable consumption, residential accommodation) produces a powerfully self-reflexive scene, “a single, potent gesture.”⁷⁶ This notion has been particularly well developed in the tourism studies iteration of “scenes”. John Urry, for example, references the theory of the “hermeneutic circle”, in which the scene is encased by the image:

a set of photography images which have already been seen in tour company brochures or on TV programmes... While the tourist is away, this then moves on to a tracking down and capturing of those images for himself. And it ends up with travellers demonstrating that they really have been there by showing their version of the images that they had seen before they set off.”⁷⁷

Whilst this formulation emphasizes the agency of the image, a place can also be seen as a “view-producing machine”⁷⁸, which engender images to be made from particular view-points. For example, they contain markers, like streets, or “viewing stations”, such as park benches or the pinnacles of large structures.

Visual mediations comprise a range of channels such as magazines, newspapers and films. In the case of the Swiss watch industry, for example, they include publications which aim to further the “watch-valley” culture with such imageries as ‘farmer watch-makers’ in snow-

⁷⁶ Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 36.

⁷⁷ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: SAGE, 2002), 129

⁷⁸ Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt, Michael Haldrop, and Jonas Larsen, “Performing Cultural Attractions,” in *Creating Experiences in the Experience Economy*, ed. Jon Sundbo and Per Darmer (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008), 176–202, on p. 184

covered valleys. In the Nollywood-house scene, reflexivity occurs through the houses being used as film locations.

Image production is also bound up with cultural events and amenities (mentioned above in relation to sociable consumption) such as festivals, fairs and exhibitions. In this regard, the term “eventification” has been used to describe projects to create regionally branded events, one case of which Philip Cooke terms “Wimbledonization”. Beyond visual images, scene reflexivity also includes regional appellations and indications such as Appellations d’Origine Controlles, or - as I shall argue in the case of a popular Nigerian beauty pageant - in new usages of the term ‘Nollywood’.

Authenticity

Silver, Clark and Yanez have argued that the combined scene elements are successful in creating such a “single potent gesture” because they contain a powerful mixture of “theatricality” and “authenticity”.⁷⁹ However, there is an in-built propensity for the artifice of the theatricality to trigger anxiety about the authenticity - that the mediation might not be genuine. He therefore sees the maintenance of the sense of authenticity as important.

In the view of Jeannerat, this authenticity is understood as the “idea they [social actors] have about the resemblance of an object to its original essence.”⁸⁰ The qualification of authenticity therefore involves vouching for the idealized origin of objects and the people who made them. The success of this process is often reflected in the question of whether something is real or fake. In the case of the watchmaking industry, the association between the watches and realness has been heavily played on by regional branding bodies. In this vein, the Fondation de la Haute Horgerie has been running a campaign (since 2009) under the tag-line, “Fake watches are for fake people. Be authentic. Buy real.”

⁷⁹Daniel Silver, Terry Nichols Clark, and Clemente Jesus Navarro Yanez, “Scenes: Social Context in an Age of Contingency,” *Social Forces* 88, no. 5 (2010): 2293–2324.

⁸⁰ Jeannerat draws on Hertz with this formulation, see Hugues Jeannerat, “Staging Experience, Valuing Authenticity: Towards a Market Perspective on Territorial Development,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 4 (2013): 370–384, p. 378



Fig. 4. Authenticity in Swiss Watch Cultural Branding Campaign.

Establishing Authenticity

Jeannerat argues that the Jura Arc region constitutes a “territorial founding system of authenticity”, which provides a “coherent socio-technical setting.” This setting consists of a range of cultural events and reflexive mediations related to the mechanical technology of watchmaking, such as dedicated exhibitions and publications. The audience (including both visitors to the region and distant watch buyers) experience this setting as real (or fake - if unsuccessful). The mechanism through which the setting creates a sense of realness can be understood as a “reality effect” [see below], and is described by Jeannerat as “lively legitimized [sic] and appreciated as real.”⁸¹

In Jeannerat’s view the “social-technical setting” of authenticity is always in a state of “unstable struggle.” He explains this unstable realness in terms of the multiple independent local actors (including journalists, retailers, bloggers, auctioneers and collectors) causing disruptions in the accepted repertoires for validating authenticity. I explain it in different terms, further elaborated below. The key point here is the struggle to maintain realness in the face of this instability is the source of great innovation through the constant refreshing of the socio-technical setting. These innovations include both the production of evermore complex

⁸¹ Hugues Jeannerat, “Staging Experience, Valuing Authenticity: Towards a Market Perspective on Territorial Development,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 20, no. 4 (2013): 370–384, on p. 380.

watches and new parallel cultural activities. This discussion of authenticity will be returned to under the Section, “Scenes in Southern Nigeria.”

Comparing the Swiss Watch-making and Nollywood House Scenes

Transaction points

Whilst the different elements of a scene are interconnected as an integrated network, it is still important to demarcate at exactly what points the transactions take place. Three main transaction points may be outlined. The first two are associated with the conventional productionist model, including creative industries. In this case, the purchase is made of a pre-specified good or service - one that is qualified *ex ante*. This category includes nearly all mobile products and some non-mobile products. In contrast, the experience economy approach emphasises fees on admission (to an experiential scene) as the primary transaction point. Unlike in the case of the pre-specified product, an “experience” entails greater surprise and experimentation, so qualification here is made *ex post* to payment. This category generally comprises non-mobile products. In the third approach - the “culturalized resident/visitor-based economy” - the cultural product is not charged for in any direct way - rather recoupment occurs through other resident or visitor amenities. The most important of these is generally accommodation: houses for residents and hotels in the case of visitors.⁸²

In outlining the above distinction, I draw on Jeannerat and Crevoisier, who employ the phrase “economic outputs” in the same way to my use of “transaction points.” They make a distinction between industries in which culture acts as an “economic output” such as movies (figure 5, box 3) and those in which it acts as an “economic input”, such as luxury cars (figure 5, box 4). Here they are arguing that in the case of movies, customers pay directly for a cultural good, whilst in that of luxury cars, the customers are paying directly for a utilitarian good to which culture has contributed brand value. Whilst such a distinction between the “cultural” and “utilitarian” is unconvincing, I have found the notion of “outputs” or “transaction points” to be helpful.

⁸² This could be considered an inversion of Richard Florida’s Creative Class. In the Rise of the Creative Class, Florida argues that appealing settings attract residents who supply skilled labour to creative industries. In this case, in contrast, the creative industries attract residents who spend money on real estate and other consumption practices.

	NON MOBILE	MOBILE
CULTURE AS EC OUTPUT (COMMODIFICATION OF CULTURE)	1: Visitor-based cultural economy (tourism spaces, urban destinations)	3: Production-orientated cultural economy (film production clusters, advanced cultural services-advertising, new media)
CULTURE AS EC INPUT (CULTURALIZATION OF INDUSTRY)	2: Culturalized resident-based economy (creative class, residential economy)	4: Culturalized production-orientated economy (fashionable/luxury industries, brand channels, cultural retail places)

Fig 5. Table with axes showing culture as input/output (y) and products as non-mobile/mobile (x).

In both the Nollywood and Swiss-watch scenes, recoupment occurs at all three transaction points, although the weighting is dissimilar. In the Swiss watch case, the most important transaction point is in the shops where the watches are sold, often in East Asia. The gross admission fees charged to enter local stages such as watch museums or festivals is relatively small. Likewise, visitor spending on hotels during tourist trips in the “watch valley” is ancillary. It is important to emphasise that both the latter activities are essential to the “authenticity” and valuation of the overall system, even if they are not key transaction points.

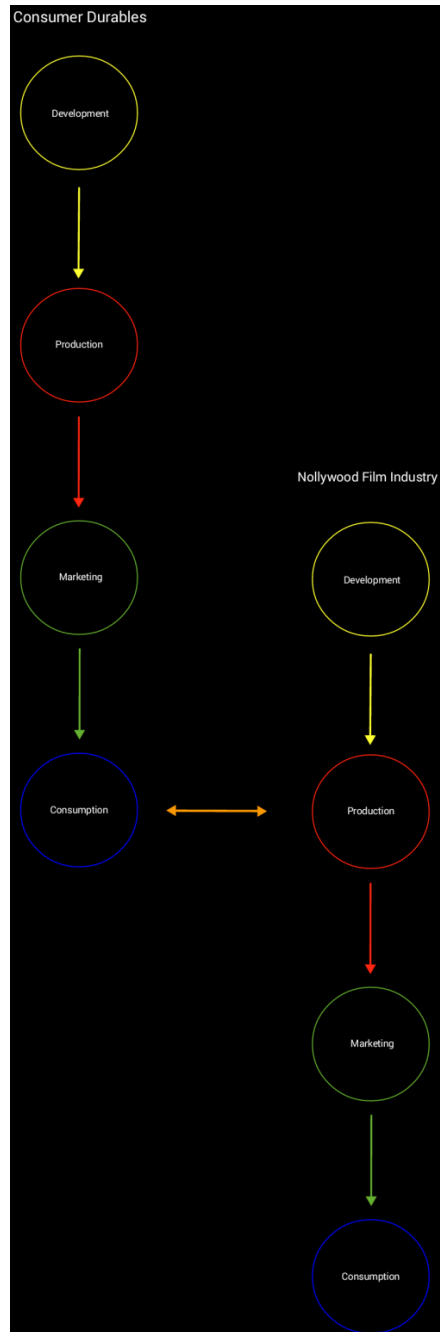
In the Nollywood-house scene, by far the most important transaction point is in spending on housing and hotels. Clearly recoupment through film-sales is important, but the sums are dwarfed in comparison with houses. Indeed, many big-men⁸³ house house/location owners are not interested in profiting directly from their interaction with Nollywood because they saw themselves as operating in an entirely different economic sphere to the filmmakers. Although cultural events are also an important element of these scenes, they tend also to be relatively unimportant as transaction points, with many not charging admission fees. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that houses, Nollywood and cultural events are interdependent in the creation of value in the system as a whole. In the following chapter, I show how Nollywood played a pivotal role in the development of the residential housing industry in Igboland, and at the same time how the houses provided an essential input into Nollywood filmmaking.

⁸³ The term “big man” is used in this context to refer to a high-status individual, especially one with great financial wealth.

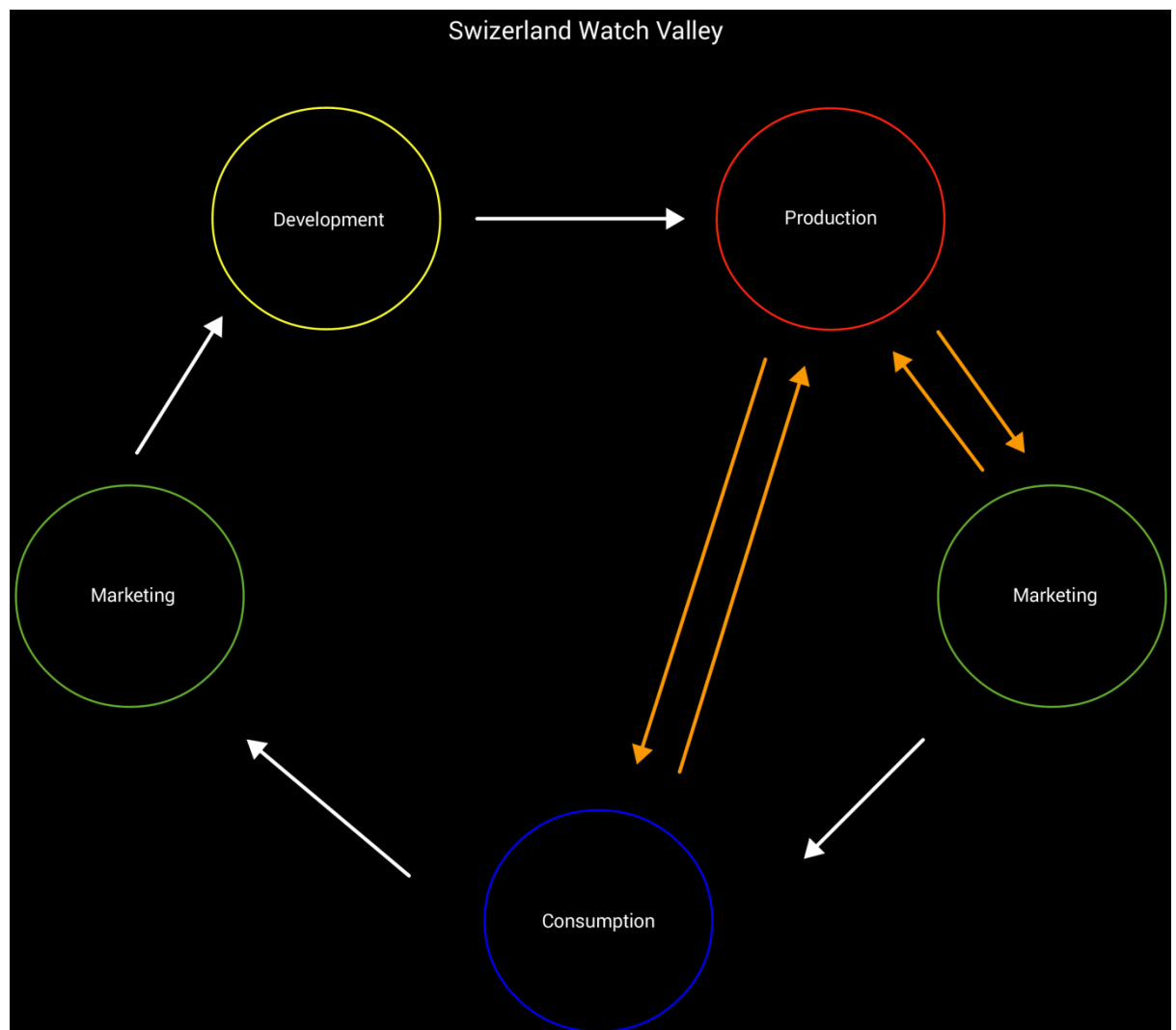
Non-linear value chains

It is also possible to compare the two cases through non-linear value-chain analysis - an approach inspired by the Global Production Networks and Circuits of Culture literatures. Although this is not the main approach adopted in this chapter, I include two diagrams here to illustrate how these issues could be understood using this approach.

In the case of the Nollywood house scene, there is an engagement between two value chains: the film value chain and the consumer-durables (e.g. houses and furnishings) value chain. The production stage in the film value chain (i.e. shooting a movie) and the consumption stage in the consumer-durables value chain (i.e. establishing and presenting a finished, decorated home) intertwine at the point of location-film shooting. In figure 6, arrow A illustrates the interactive relationship between consuming-at-home and film production.



In the case of the Swiss watch-making industry, only one value chain is primarily engaged. However, as with the Nollywood-house case, there is an intertwining of the production and consumption stages. In figure 7, interaction B, shows how the mechanical process and cultural setting of production became key components of the marketing and consumption of the product. In both cases, the circulations between production and consumption produced products with a unique character. In the following chapter, I consider the circulations in the Nigerian case in more detail and then in the conclusion I consider how this constituted a competitive advantage and therefore contributed to industrial development.



Scenes in Southern Nigeria⁸⁵

In his discussion of authenticity, Jeannerat defines the concept as the “idea social actors have about the resemblance of an object to its original essence”⁸⁶ and describes authenticating processes as enchanting the scene elements as, “lively legitimized [sic] and appreciated as real.”⁸⁷ Whilst this is a key contribution in terms building a bridge from economic geography towards theories of authenticity and realness, his statements constitute only a cursory explication of the latter issues.

Aesthetic formations and sensational forms

I therefore turn to the work of Birgit Meyer - a media and religion anthropologist at the University of Utrecht - who has developed an intricate new approach to understanding realness and material forms. Meyer calls the approach “aesthetic formations” and outlines a series of formative processes in which “sensational forms” are central. I see these two concepts as closely analogous to the scenes and scene elements of the preceding discussion. In the following section, I further elaborate the theoretical foundations of Meyer’s approach.⁸⁸

Meyer argues that the sense of the realness is established by being “felt in the bones.” This includes both a form’s representational properties as well as its bodily and visceral effects (their “reality effects”). She is therefore deploying the word “aesthetic” in the Aristotelian sense of “aesthesia” - which comprises the totality of our sensory modes (perception, feeling and signification) that create our combined “sensory experience” and “sensitive knowledge.”

The preceding paragraph would appear to suggest that “aesthetic formations” is a classic phenomenological approach. Indeed, Meyer endorses Merleau-Ponty in asserting that “sensation and knowledge about the world are grounded in the body.” However, this is not in fact her position: she rejects any concept of “direct” or “immediate” perception. Instead, she

⁸⁵ The term “Southern Nigeria” is used by a number of scholars working on West Africa including Brian Larkin and Alessandro Jedlowski. It describes an area within which there are strong currents of cultural interchange and has common cultural characteristics including Christian religion and widespread use of Pidgin English. It incorporates the two primary fieldwork zones of this thesis, Lagos and Igboland.

⁸⁶ Jeannerat draws on Deleuze with this formulation.

⁸⁷ Jeannerat, “Staging Experience, Valuing Authenticity: Towards a Market Perspective on Territorial Development,” on p. 380.

⁸⁸ Birgit Meyer, *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion, and the Senses* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

argues that these sensations do not precede mediation but rather result from it. The mediations (which encompass a wide range of culture forms) are able to “tune” people’s senses through enhancing or excluding possibilities for perception. In this way, they can convert others’ experience into one’s own personal experience. Meyer gives the example of a film in which the audience starts to “inhabit” the characters, signalled through such exclamations as, “this [scene in the film] happened in my house!” She argues that this statement does not represent a coincidental similarity between plot-line and personal experience, but rather a re-interpretation of personal experience that harmonizes it with the plot-line.

Meyer therefore concludes that sensations of immediacy are not part of a “direct encounter with the ‘world’ but rather are part of “aesthetic formations.” She likens this approach to Michael Maffessoli’s work on “aesthetic style.” In Maffessoli’s schema, material forms stimulate shared sentiments and “moods of feeling together.” These shared moods create “style”, which is the “forming form” that produces subjects and habitus. In the context of a contemporary West African city, Meyer describes this style as producing a “Pentecostal-lite atmosphere” and lists architecture, films, pictures and other material culture forms as constituting the local “mood-creating apparatus.”

Meyer proceeds to present a theory of the synchronization of subjects’ imaginations. She argues that imaginations only take on a sense of realness when they become shared with other people. Mediations “tune” people to internalize cultural forms as shared mental images. She describes this process as “the internalization and incorporation of physical pictures (as mental images) and the externalization of mental images (as physical pictures and other cultural forms).” Although this statement acknowledges a two-way process, it is the material pictures/forms that are the driver that then leads to the mental figuration of shared images and imaginaries (which are in-turn re-expressed as material pictures). She gives the example of films making audiences resonate by creating popular catch-phrases which temporarily become a hugely popular part of the vernacular vocabulary. Meyer uses this theory to make the case that imaginations are not representations of the external world but rather take their realness from the power of the medium to establish common imaginaries. In this line of thought, there are some echoes of Latour as Meyer sees the material forms as “imagining actors.”

Material pictures (and other material forms operating as mediums) occupy an important place within Meyer’s theory of “aesthetic formations.” She delves more deeply into their “reality effects” through the concept of “sensational forms.” The term “sensational” encapsulates all of the types of sense outlined above: sensation as perception, as emotion and as “making

sense” (understanding/signification). In addition, it includes the sensation of a beyond that is not directly seeable or graspable through the ordinary senses. An important aspect of ‘real’ sensational forms, therefore, is that they give access to this ‘beyond’ place as a revelation. Typically, they employ an “aesthetics of persuasion” to convince the viewer of the truth of the revelation they appear to show and to deny that it is a mere fabrication. This usually involves an overpowering cocktail of the other sense forms.

My interest here is specifically to consider buildings in light of Meyer’s insights on “sensational forms.” I draw on Karin Barber, Michael Rowlands and Andrew Apter — as well as Meyer — to argue that Igbo houses and hotels constitute three types of sensational forms.

Absolute mysteriousness and moderate mysteriousness of wealth; explaining wealth and its absence

In order to explore the various types of sensational forms, it is helpful to use the work of Karin Barber as a starting point. She sees sensational forms⁸⁹ in the Southern Nigerian context as being intimately intertwined with ideas about money and wealth. She justifies this by arguing that wealth has become “inseparable” from human worth in the region, as “people are constituted as members of a shared humanity by money.” Barber therefore argues that sensational forms constitute different understandings of one topic in particular: the nature of wealth and its absence. The proceeding discussion will briefly zoom out from sensational forms to a wider exploration of ideas about wealth in Nigerian society.

There are two strands of thought in Barber’s work. The first, which she proposed in her early work “Popular Reactions to the Petro-Naira”, suggests that the sources of wealth are absolutely mysterious. In this view, the sudden appearance of fabulous lifestyles during the oil boom, without any apparent basis in hard work, encouraged a popular belief that wealth or poverty were pre-determined, either by God’s grace or by occultic forces.

The second, which Barber described as the attitude of “artisanal entrepreneurship” in her later work *The Generation of Plays*, suggests that wealth’s origins are only moderately mysterious.⁹⁰ In this view, peoples’ attitudes to wealth generation were shaped more by their own personal professional experiences. She bases this on the case of traders, farmers and especially artisans (such as bricklayers, tailors, carpenters and metal trunk makers). Here, wealth was a

⁸⁹ It should be noted that Barber’s central focus is not the materiality of sensational forms, but rather their linguistic and narrative properties.

⁹⁰ Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yorùbá Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), especially here 348-352.

consequence of both hard work and a variety of unpredictable variables, such as bribes and fluctuations in demand. Barber gave the example of the bricklaying profession, which requires hugely strenuous physical labour, as well as leading to windfalls through contracting, the “most profitable of modern entrepreneurial lines.” This led artisanal entrepreneurs to “live out from day to day the drama of self-reliance and individual decision-making”, even though they still “ascribed their success to forces outside their own individual conscious efforts.” As a result, Barber argued that scenes in the plays often had an “oscillating” character, between the poles of “individual self-making and divine providence.”

Barber also argues that the particular logic of wealth-exploration depends on whether it is being considered from a position of wealth or poverty. Once wealth is achieved, the main question is whether it has emanated from divine blessing and “real work” or from the devil, “fake work” and corruption. The rich tend to want to prove the former and discredit suspicions of the latter. In this view, the wealth comes under suspicion of being illegitimate in origin due to a “limited goods model” in which a person only becomes wealthy through the selfish sucking up of other peoples’ life energy. However, if the person is still living in poverty, the key question is why there is not yet any sign of the wealth manifesting itself. The most desirable explanation, from the poor person’s point of view, is that he needs to search more carefully for signs/auguries of future success or patiently continue to work hard; and that the fast wealth achieved by others around him has been achieved through occultic or corrupt shortcuts.

These separate axes - whether wealth is absolutely mysterious and predestined or moderately mysterious and indeterminate, and whether the evaluation is being conducted by the wealthy or the poor, run through much of the wider scholarship as well as my own primary data. On the absolutely mysterious side (and primarily from the point of view of the poor), Birgit Meyer has explored the Prosperity Gospel, which is an increasingly widespread outlook in Southern Nigeria.⁹¹ In this view, the world is seen as a “site of spiritual war”, in which wealth can emanate from either God or the Devil. Hard work is not seen as crucial, with success primarily dependent on the power of prayer. Born Again believers consider themselves as already blessed by God and are therefore destined towards prosperity, even if it has not manifested yet.

⁹¹ Birgit Meyer, “Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberal Capitalism: Faith, Prosperity and Vision in African Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches”, *Journal for the Study of Religion* 20, no. 2 (2007): 5–28

To an extent, my primary data supports Meyer's point of view. All of the craftsmen who were not rich had the experience of working with little financial reward at the same time as seeing a select few suddenly become extraordinarily wealthy. As set-worker Gerrard observed, "if hard work leads to success then we all would have made it!" In this view, there is little connection of hard work with financial reward - with a huge amount of luck needed even to be paid for a job. Gaining success was imagined not as a cumulative process of effort and achievement but as one giant leap, as hitting the jackpot. Gerrard described it as a matter of "meeting someone, then getting a contract" and pointed to the example of Timothy. Timothy was an out-of work musician who had suddenly won large set-construction contracts through playing on his music-industry contacts and falsely presenting himself as a set-designer. Events Manager Peggy described an outlook in which "a lot of people are losing hope", as their talent and hard work are futile, with other people just "buying off" the opportunities. She dreamed of creating a platform "where we see your hard work, we see your talent and you are rewarded for it. Not something someone just comes out from nowhere and buys with money." But for now, she saw no such opportunities in Nigeria.⁹²

On the other hand - on the moderately mysterious side - I encountered a powerful ethic of craftsmanship, which was particularly strong amongst people from artisanal or construction backgrounds. There was a belief within this group that good outcomes were based on skilled craftsmanship and hard-work. The set-carpenter Adeniji Duromi evocatively encapsulated this point of view:

when you're trying to construct a flat, you can't gamble: you can't be using Evo-stik [a glue] when you supposed to use a gum; you can't be using a screw when you're meant to use a nail, it won't work!⁹³

Their viewpoint is consistent with the moderate mysteriousness of Barber's "artisanal entrepreneurship." Whilst they acknowledged a small group of people who got rich through alternative means, they saw themselves as belonging to the field of ordinary people who had to work hard. Hard work⁹⁴ was seen as an ingredient that - if used in combination with more

⁹² Interview with Events Manager Godwin Praise "Peggy" Ekene, 21 May 2017. This attitude was reflected in the huge popularity of gambling on both the older "Baba Ijebu" lottery and the newer Bet9Ja online betting platform. Interestingly, the gamblers considered the prime mechanism for winning to be gaining information from mysterious online contacts. These contacts would provide information about match-fixing, which was assumed to be the universal mode of organizing sport competitions.

⁹³ Focus group interviewee set-carpenter Adeniji Duromi 11 April 2018

⁹⁴ hard work was generally seen as specifically *physical* work

mysterious ones - could achieve success. For example, they spoke of God helping those who work hard and also hard work paying off *if* done with a “good heart.” Others saw hard work as leading to goodwill from one’s bosses or contractors, who might then provide introductions and connections, which in turn could then lead to the jackpot.

From the point of view of the rich, Michael Rowlands and Daniel Jordan Smith also describe a concept of wealth as reflecting less mysterious forces, including rational entrepreneurial strategies (albeit in the face of mysterious forces). The Cameroonian and Nigerian businessmen of their studies are focused on creating wealth through the careful maintenance of relationships with potential investors.⁹⁵ Whilst success depends on the investors deciding that the businessmen are pre-destined to success and not eternally unlucky⁹⁶ (or subject to occult forces), the businessmen do see their strategies as a form of business management in the sense that they have a predictable impact over others’ perceptions of supernatural influence.

Explorations of wealth and material forms

At this point, my argument zooms back in on sensational forms. Whereas Barber perceptively analysed how explorations into the sources of wealth played out verbally in society and in the narrative of plays, she did not investigate their manifestation in (and relationship with) material consumption forms.⁹⁷ In Barber’s approach, there are two poles: the person and the wealth. However, in my approach, there is a third: the material manifestation (sensational form) of the wealth. I draw on Meyer’s analysis of the prosperity Gospel, in which the divine blessing is not just reflected in an intangible monetary wealth, but specifically in material and consumer possessions.⁹⁸ As our focus moves away from abstract monetary wealth to the material expressions of it, the logics of wealth exploration become even more byzantine. For

⁹⁵ Michael Rowlands, “The Material Culture of Success: Ideals and Life Cycles in Cameroon”, in *Consumption and Identity*, ed. Jonathan Friedman (London: Routledge, 1994), 106–19; Michael Rowlands, “The Consumption of an African Modernity”, in *African Material Culture*, ed. Mary Jo Arnoldi and Kris L. Hardin (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996), 188–213; Daniel Jordan Smith, *To Be a Man Is Not a One-Day Job*

⁹⁶ as an *Atchul* - a person who is constantly unlucky without being under any particular occultic forces

⁹⁷ Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yorùbá Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000)

⁹⁸ Meyer, “Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberal Capitalism”

both the wealthy and poor, the specific aesthetics of the material forms take on a special significance.

In the earlier section, two axes were outlined: the level of wealth mysteriousness and whether it was being evaluated from a position of affluence or poverty. When considered in relationship to material sensational forms, these can be used to create a matrix of three types:

	From position of lack of wealth	From position of wealth
Moderate mysteriousness	1. Aesthetics of Money-Making	2. Aesthetics of Money-Authenticating
Absolute mysteriousness		3. Aesthetics of Money-Protection

Fig. 6. Three Sensational forms

Three sensational forms of properties in Nigeria

1. “Aesthetics of money-making”

In the *aesthetics of money making*, the material form itself invokes the money (which is initially absent) into existence. This can work in two ways: either through a spiritual materialization of wealth or through a temporal process in which the material form persuades others of one’s good prospects.

Spiritual materialization of wealth

In the spiritual materialization of wealth, material forms “conjure the real.” Apter sees this as an embrace of the logic of the oil boom, in which “a national dramaturgy of appearances and representations beckoned towards modernity and brought it into being.”⁹⁹ In this view, material consumption became the source of wealth as part of a “magical realism of Nigerian modernity.” Apter argues that televisions and cameras - and I would add houses and hotels- are a central part of this “seeing-is-believing ontology” in which shiny simulacra cause real development.

Whereas Apter implies this view is part of an airy pantheist perspective, Meyer shows that “spiritual materialization” has been fully integrated within “Pentecostal-lite” theology. In her argument, a person who is still not sufficiently prosperous attempts to confirm his divine blessing - and therefore wealthy fate - through the acquisition of material forms. Such people often suffer from an anxiety regarding why their wealth has not yet fully manifested, and they see the material accoutrements as a way to usher in the impending affluence. She describes this as a “world-making” theology, whereby the material forms actually have the power to make the Holy Spirit materialize. In this view, the enjoyment of these forms is a “religiously legitimated practice” that is perfectly compatible with piety.

Meyer argues that there is a flip-side to this godly “spiritual materialization.” Whilst those aspirational (i.e. insufficiently prosperous) people use the material forms to invoke the fruits of their divine blessing, they question why others have already attained greater wealth, and suspect the use of occultic short-cuts.¹⁰⁰ In the occultic materialization of wealth, certain material forms - including houses - act as shrines and fetishes that are encased within the walls or in secret rooms. As endlessly depicted in Nollywood films, the sacrifices made to these can

⁹⁹ Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005), 41

¹⁰⁰ Meyer, “Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberal Capitalism”

produce vast amounts of cash. Whilst the main point here is that the material form conveys a certain aesthetic, it seems that occult intentions are not pure rumour or “occult economy” as argued by the Commaroffs.¹⁰¹ Although I saw no signs of Ogwu-Ego (i.e. human sacrifice), I did encounter shrines in the family compounds where sacrifices of chickens and goats were made to the “gods of the land.”

Temporal process of persuasion

In the temporal process of persuasion, the material form persuades others of the owner’s current success and excellent future prospects and therefore attracts investment. This can work either through respectable or dissimulatory practices.

For Rowlands, the aesthetics of money-making is a moral practice that persuades potential investors of the home-owner’s credit-worthiness.¹⁰² The building of a big house goes along with a successful lifestyle and serves as an augury that the home-owner is on course for success. The practice is seen as socially acceptable and can be understood as something akin to John Iliffe’s concept of “respectability”.¹⁰³ In this notion, a “westernized lifestyle”¹⁰⁴ is valued and respectable people require certain material objects, notably self-owned-houses and fancy clothes and cars to be considered credit-worthy by investors. Within my primary research, an aphorism that came up with great frequency was, “the way that you dress is the way you will be addressed.” An interesting example of such an approach came up in discussions over the ways carpenters should comport themselves in a professional context. Great emphasis was put on carrying the tools in a box rather than a sack-bag, to having the tape-rule affixed to the belt rather than just holding it, and to wearing neat and clean clothes.

On the other hand, when taken to the limit, such practices are seen as an immoral form of dissimulation. The vernacular term “packaging” describes a practice whereby a material form deceptively gives the impression of wealth with the objective of generating it. In the words of

¹⁰¹ The argument by Commaroff and Commaroff relates to the idea that accusations of spiritual attack must be read metaphorically as resentments and anxieties about socio-economic welfare. See Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony,” *American Ethnologist* 26, no. 2 (1999): 279–303.

¹⁰² Michael Rowlands, “The Material Culture of Success: Ideals and Life Cycles in Cameroon,” in *Consumption and Identity*, ed. Jonathan Friedman (London: Routledge, 1994), 106–19.

¹⁰³ Iliffe sees respectability as an evolution in the early-to-mid 20th Century of an earlier concept of “householder honour.” John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge University Press, 2005),

¹⁰⁴ Particular jobs - especially clerkly or teaching occupations were also valued as part of this notion of respectability. Iliffe emphasizes that farming and, in West Africa, trading could also be the basis for respectability.

set-carpenter Seun, “I no be rich man but let me do as if I’m rich man.”¹⁰⁵ Although “packaging” attracts ridicule, it is also widely acknowledged to have powerful “reality effects” that can temporarily enchant others, evocatively described by Events Manager Peggy as “like chasing glitters when you think it’s diamond.”¹⁰⁶

The deception can take place through a variety of mechanisms. First, it can involve optical illusions - the material forms are photographed with a framing that fundamentally alters the appearance of the form. A particularly popular practice amongst young girls is to take pictures of each other in front of modern, luxurious shop-fronts at one of the country’s new malls, carefully excluding from the frame branding or other place-specific information. They then post the pictures or create ‘video-stories’ on social media, giving the impression that they have been in Europe or America.¹⁰⁷ On occasion, such practices are also employed in the case of houses. The set-worker Gerald posted a photo of himself posing in the Project Fame Academy set, which was designed to resemble a domestic interior. When I showed the picture to the other set workers, Seun commented, “The picture speaks a lot...” and argued that for people who were not closely involved in the show, the picture seemed to show Gerald sitting in a house, rather than a temporary set.¹⁰⁸

Second, another type of packaging involved cases in which the material object is at it appears (unlike in the case of the optical illusions), but the wealth that it indexes is not because the apparent owner is not actually wealthy. This can involve borrowing - in which material objects that are apparently owned by one person are actually borrowed from another. Lagos women, for example, were considered to be “full of packaging” due to their tendency to wear beautiful clothes that in reality belonged to their friends.

Alternatively, the apparent owner is the real owner but does not have the level of wealth that the material form implies. Often this type of packaging related to wearing clothes that cost more than the owner could sustainably afford. On many occasions, a package’s cost was unfavourably compared to the owner’s actual income. Set-worker Seun complained that his colleague Gerald’s choice to wear suit and ties, jackets, sunglasses and spectacles wrongly

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Master Carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun “Seun”, 16 June 2017

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Events Manager Godwin Praise “Peggy” Ekene, 21 May 2017

¹⁰⁷ Interviews with Master Carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun “Seun”, 16 June 2017; Miss Nollywood Adaeze Okoro, 22 June 2017; Events Manager Godwin Praise “Peggy” Ekene, 21 May 2017

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Master Carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun “Seun”, 16 June 2017

made it seem that he was a rich man on a good salary.¹⁰⁹ My discussions with Gerald appeared to confirm this. For example, regarding the items in just one of his outfits, Gerald had spent N18,000 on a suit and N6000 for a dress shirt, which together equated to around two month's real salary.¹¹⁰

Packaging is believed to be effective through a mechanism of dissimulation or con-artistry whereby the expensive "package" attracts investors or richer romantic partners. Akinwale Oluwaleyimu, for example, spoke of an actor whose "packaging has helped him a lot, somebody is talking to him about him coming on board something [i.e. a lucrative contracting deal], he's talking a lot of money because he looks at him..."¹¹¹ In a similar vein, packaging was thought effective at tricking potential romantic partners into a relationship, the objective of Lagos girls who were "full of packaging" was thought "to make you feel that they are of the same class as you, while they are not."

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Master Carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun "Seun", 16 June 2017

¹¹⁰ Gerald's official salary was N20,000, but he rarely was paid on time or in full, so his actual salary was far less than this - he estimated around N12000. This was common practice in Mr Bedford's company. It is of course possible that Gerald exaggerated the cost of these items, although at the time he appeared to be somewhat embarrassed about the cost and did emphasise that he bought these items with a view to using them for a long time.

¹¹¹ Interview with Events manager Akinwale Oluwaleyimu, 6 June 2017

2. “The aesthetics of money-authentication”

Sensational forms of money-authentication accredit wealth that is already in existence as “real”. This type of sensational form is typically associated with those who have already accumulated a large amount of wealth. These forms convey an affiliation with authentic sources (either divine blessing or hard work) and not inauthentic ones (occultism or corruption). Like the *aesthetic of money-making* (but unlike that of *money-protection*), it is an open, outward-orientated aesthetic. A key aspect of this form is its attempted distancing from all money-making activities.

In the aesthetics of *money-authentication*, village houses are the sensational form *par-excellence*. They counteract suspicions of packaging: through merit of their actual existence and location, they confirm that money is real and being used in a moral way. These effects are further enhanced by their particular aesthetic features.

Village houses derive potency through proving that the owner is really wealthy, especially in the cases of people who usually live far away. A house in the village is seen as an incomparable sensational form for proving real wealth. This is reflected in several popular aphorisms, including, *Akuruo ulo, Akuruo ulo amonyi batraya* - “When your wealth reaches home, we know the bread behind it.” Buffy Okeke-Ujiudu, an up-and-coming big man who was about to embark on building his own house, reflected further on this perspective:

How do I know how successful you are in Brooklyn or London? How do I know?
You can come back in Christmas with a bit of money but ok, everyone comes back
then with a bit of money, but if I come to your home... ok you’re doing well for
yourself.¹¹²

Proving real wealth is not just about showing that the money was not made up, but also about proving that it was generated and used in a moral way. By merit of their location, houses comprise sharing with the community - whether in terms of beautifying the village¹¹³ or as contributing to Igboland in general¹¹⁴. This proves that the owner is loyal to his people, and that he can be relied upon because he remembers “that home is home”¹¹⁵. In contrast, if

¹¹² Interview with Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹¹³ Interview with Architect Ifanyi Ene, 22 December 2015

¹¹⁴ Interview with Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹¹⁵ Interview with Architect Ifanyi Ene, 22 December 2015

a person boasts of his billions abroad but does not build in the village, he is considered as someone who cannot be counted upon.¹¹⁶ Sharing through village house-construction also gives confidence in the character of the owner, and reduces suspicions about the sources of the wealth. Similarly, houses contribute to a sense of propriety, respectability and order:

People will ask, "who is building the house?" I will say, "the son of Mr Elvis Nadeke." They will say "Ok, the one who travelled - good, good! He's not wasting his time there, he's doing the right thing."¹¹⁷

The specific aesthetic elements of the houses are also important. The grandiose architectural features, in particular, create a sense of overpowering awesomeness. As part of my interview practice, I often showed photographs from the big houses to interview subjects. The interviewees were undisturbed by the lack of aesthetic harmony, instead offering unqualified praise for the vastness of the structures. One interior in particular - belonging to a senator in Delta State - elicited great accolades. In response to the image, beauty queen Miss Enugu exclaimed, "Wow!... [pause]... Beautiful!", followed by several seconds of silence and staring at the photo. Even Pikolo, the experienced Awka location manager was greatly impressed by the picture, proclaiming, "the decoration is superb!... It is SUPERB!." This awesomeness can be understood as a form of "closure". Michael Rowlands argues that large houses "represent achievement as beyond question in its sheer massivity and weight of accumulation."¹¹⁸ In this way, the awesomeness is so arresting that it shuts-off or brings 'closure' from other worlds, banishing any unsettling doubts.

¹¹⁶Interview with Architect Ifanyi Ene, 22 December 2015

¹¹⁷ Interview with Architect Ifanyi Ene, 22 December 2015

¹¹⁸ Michael Rowlands, "The Consumption of an African Modernity," in *African Material Culture*, ed. Mary Jo Arnoldi and Kris L. Hardin (Indiana University Press, 1996), 188–213.

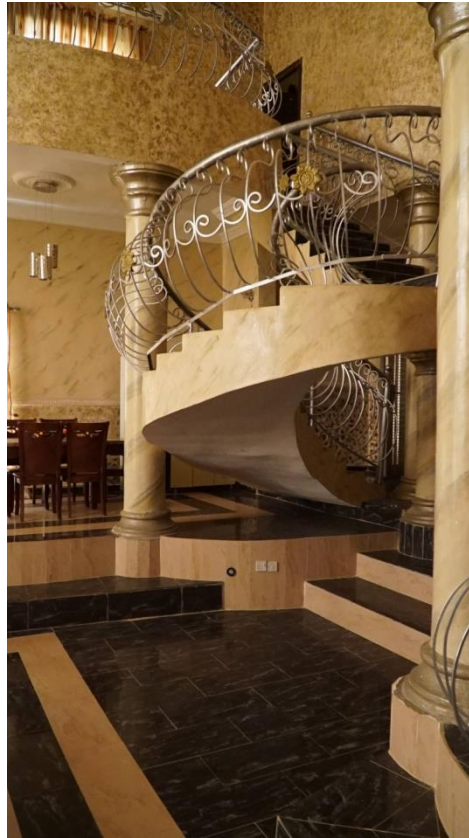


Fig. 6. A house interior in Delta State, December 2015.

Lastly, the *aesthetics of money authentication* often includes imported furnishings and local copies of foreign furnishings as mediated through foreign catalogues and television/films, resulting in a “catalogue aesthetic” and a focus on the objects’ surface and finishing. Drawing on Birgit Meyer, these styles reach out to an imagined transnational urban mode of life and attempt to “take part in emergent global patterns of consumption.”¹¹⁹ Meyer demonstrates that these modes constitute a form of bridging by citing exclamations of wonder that such glamorous things had found their way into the here and now. For example, when the Ghanaian movies started picturing huge local mansions (that had previously only been seen in Nollywood films), audience members responded by praising the films for showing that such houses now existed “in our Ghana here!.”¹²⁰

This bridging can help to distance the houses from the world of village tradition and its associated “diabolicalism”. I first came across these characteristics when attending my first Igbo house-opening celebration. On arrival at the property, I enthusiastically started searching

¹¹⁹ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 92.

¹²⁰ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 103.

for locally made furnishings and ornaments. However, the owner, Sheila Egemonye, assured me that there were no such objects in her house. Instead, all the furniture came from Dubai, “but that it must be remembered that [she] got all the ideas from interior decor shops in America and the UK!”¹²¹ Another new house owner emphasized that nearly 100% of the furnishings came from UK branches of IKEA and DFS. The owners did not exclusively emphasize global metropolises, rather it seemed critical to connect to any urban centre outside Igboland: indeed Mr Egbonike emphasized that his house was inspired by his time in Abidjan in Cote d’Ivoire, whilst the curtains in several of the houses came from Lagos.¹²²

Differentiating the aesthetics of *money-authentication* and *money making*

The aesthetics of *money-authentication* and *money-making* have only subtle differences. There is often great ambiguity: as Meyer suggests, “it is difficult to tell on the basis of sheer appearance.”¹²³ If the *aesthetic of money authentication* is not implemented with perfect success, it can easily be interpreted as the aesthetic of *money-making*. Both aesthetics have some similarity to Walter Benjamin’s concept of the *aura*, understood as “an elusive phenomenal substance, ether or halo that surrounds a person or object of perception, encapsulating their individuality and authenticity.”¹²⁴ In his conception, the aura has many sides, including authenticity but also a fake or daemonic (and even specifically blood-sacrificial) aspect. This presents a challenge for those trying to legitimize their wealth as authentically sourced, as the two forms are so similar. The challenge for forms of *money-authentication* to successfully differentiate themselves from those of *money-making* - is one of the key themes in the following chapter.

Differentiating the two forms requires a high level of discernment or even a “spiritual eye.” I came across considerable disagreement about which aspects of a house’s physical form indicated the type of wealth on which it was based. The particular way that the “overpowering awesomeness” was inflected could easily alter the kind of aesthetic being conveyed. Location Manager Piccolo responded to the awesomeness of one house as, “if I come into this house, the first thing that will come to my head is, ‘this thing na ogwu ego [blood sacrifice] house!’”

¹²¹ Interview with houseowner Sheila Egemonye, 29 December 2015

¹²² Interview with Alex Egbonike, 3 January 2016

¹²³ Birgit Meyer, “Pentecostalism and Neo-Liberal Capitalism”

¹²⁴ Miriam Bratu Hansen, “Benjamin’s Aura,” *Critical Inquiry* 34, no. 2 (January 1, 2008): 336–75, see p.340.

This comment was made about exactly the same house (pictured in figure 6) that many others had found beautiful and authenticating - thus indicating the level of confusion between the two forms.

The interviewees tended to emphasise subtle clues that they could use to distinguish the two kinds of awesomeness. Events manager Peggy, for example, argued that the best way to tell was through considering the construction process: whereas the *money-authenticating* house would take years to build, the *money-making* house could be constructed in as little as three months. In a somewhat similar vein, there was suspicion of people who had built large mansions in the village but who were actually living in poverty in their main residence - thereby misrepresenting their wealth. Buffy Okeke-Ojiudu gave the example of a former school-mate who had built a huge mansion in the village with Italian imported tiles and limestone cladding but was living in Abuja in “just a really small one-bedroom flat!”

Another category of clue related to explicitly traditional customs. Abiriba physician Chekwas, for example, suggested that the presence of palm fronds in the hallway was an important sign.¹²⁵ Engineer Stephen suggested that certain designs - especially stars - and animal figurines (particularly tortoises) were suspicious, although these could also simply be for “beautification.”¹²⁶

The types of events held at the houses were also considered as significant clues. Rowlands emphasizes that houses act as stages for sensory-stimulating events and celebrations at which food, drink and the general fruits of success are distributed. Such shared consumption is a way to acknowledge shared ownership of the wealth - that the success originated in the community (and ancestors) and that it will go back to the community (and descendents). The opening up of the houses in this way is essential for allaying suspicions that occultic or other secret activities are going on within. As we shall see, the closing up of houses was seen as the most certain indication of “fake wealth.” Rowlands argues that an imagery of celebration including strong luminous colours, glitter “sheen, and a certain luminosity” is associated with the *aesthetics of money authentication*.¹²⁷ However, if these colour schemes are not perfectly

¹²⁵ Interview with physician Chekwas Obasi, 21 April 2018

¹²⁶ Interview with engineer Stephen Chinedu Ikeogu, 16 April 2018

¹²⁷ Michael Rowlands, “The Consumption of an African Modernity,” in *African Material Culture*, ed. Mary Jo Arnoldi and Kris L. Hardin (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1996), 188–213.

executed, they can become hypnotic, and certain colours - especially red - are liable to be associated with the *money-making aesthetic*.



Fig 7. A house exterior that raised suspicions. Abiriba, May 2017.

3. “Aesthetics of money-protection”

Whilst the aesthetics of *money-authentication* relied on persuasive gestures, *the aesthetics of money-making* was based on invocation. To some extent, these were similar in the sense that they both employed a subtle language (which accounted for the confusion between them).

The *aesthetics of protection*, on the other hand, accepts the presence of powerful forces and attempts to block them out through robust obstruction, like fortresses in Igboland’s vista. Uduku has shown that successful Igbo people were already beginning to favour self-contained houses as far back as the 1940s and 50s.¹²⁸ This constituted an important break from the older tradition of the “family house”. In this tradition, the extended family had a right to access the communal compound. Meyer argues that the transition to the “self-contained” house reflected a new model of personhood.¹²⁹ Whilst the Pentecostal household of the husband and wife is considered a safe environment, the outside world of ancestral relations came to be seen as the abode of the devil.¹³⁰ Events manager Peggy highlighted the perspective that the most danger lay in proximity to the village:

[occultic attack] works with the environment - if you are around that environment
it will affect you, if you are not around there, it won’t.

In Larkin’s view, the extended family has come to be seen as the “source of deepest treachery... as corrupt, cheating people of money and betraying them...”¹³¹ My interviewees saw the self-contained house partly in these protective terms. Events Manager Peggy highlighted that it was important for the nuclear family to distance itself from these forces. Similarly, engineer Stephen argued that living in the self-contained house offered protection by allowing people to keep a social distance,

It’s better that [the extended family] does not live in the same house with you...
people will normally have his own secrets, so if they find out your secret they will
like to harm you, at your back. An outsider cannot do juju on you...¹³²

¹²⁸Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s”,

¹²⁹ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 110

¹³⁰ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 111

¹³¹ Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 171

¹³² Interview with engineer Stephen Chinedu Ikeogu, 16 April 2018. “Juju” refers to a system of belief which explains the causes of personal misfortune through spiritual attack by another for the purpose of material gain.

Often the occultic attack would require the attacker to give a personal possession of the intended victim to the native doctor, such as his picture or some of his hair.

The houses therefore employ a closed aesthetic that provides “buffering” or “anaesthesia”, whereby sensory stimuli from the outside world, including occult forces, are blocked out. The specific aesthetic features of the houses channel these sensibilities. Ifeanyi Ene, an Onitsha architect, described how security features were amongst the most fundamental specifications for local houses, including “burglary proofs” on windows, iron external doors, high vantage points and CCTV. Inside the house, high internal balconies were popular. Despite observers questioning their practical security benefits¹³³, location manager Piccolo saw them as giving the owners a sense of security:

[the internal balcony is for] security, because if you're there, you could look, you could see somebody there without the person seeing you... like if you come in the sitting room to shoot somebody, if he's there down, you can easily shoot, but up [you can't].¹³⁴



Fig. 8. A house interior in Delta State, December 2015.

¹³³ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

¹³⁴ Interview with Awka Location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

Around the houses' exteriors, elaborate and foreboding gate structures were a characteristic feature. It was common for compounds to have two rings of high walls and gates, and occasionally even three.¹³⁵ This created insulating moat-like layers around the houses, with the houses themselves often entirely concealed. Some houses even employed an explicit fortification-aesthetic on their outer gates with the building of castle-style gatehouses. In the examples below, one appears to be in a Trojan style and another even bares the sign "tower gate." Such gates were felt necessary both for stopping intruders and warding off spiritual attacks. The immediate perimeters were considered especially vulnerable to such assaults, usually through charms that could be dropped near the entrance. Events manager Peggy, for example, described a common charm called *Achiere* that would be dropped in front of a house in the expectation that the person would step on it (causing his leg to decay).

The sensational form of "money-protecting" is therefore a closed aesthetic that provides "buffering", whereby sensory stimuli from the outside world, including occult forces, are blocked out. Similarly, they also provide a physical barrier against more temporal offensive forces, especially security forces acting under the guise of "anti-corruption."

¹³⁵ see Interview with Awka Location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015



Fig. 9 A double-gate structure around a compound, Nnewi, Anambra State. December 2015.



Fig. 10. A compound's gate in Asaba. December 2015.



Fig. 11. A compound's gate and gatehouse. Abiriba, May 2017.



Fig. 12. A compound's gate and gatehouse. Abiriba, May 2017.

Conclusion: Chapter 3

The concept of creative-industries clusters is well established. However, here I have also elaborated the new concept of experience-economy scenes, incorporating sociable consumption, at-home consumption and residential accommodation; and reflexive image-making. This has drawn together such diverse approaches to the urban environment as Jeannerat and Crevoisier's work on territorial "experience staging", Paul Makeham and Silver et al. on urban stages, Sharon Zukin on art workers' impact on real estate, Charles Landry on the blurring of shopping, entertainment and culture and John Urry on reflexive mediation.

Whereas creative economy clusters are characterized by economic inputs and outputs, the attributes of experience economy scenes are less well defined. The urban theorists on whom I draw identify theatricality and authenticity as key qualities. The work of the anthropologist Birgit Meyer on "aesthetic formations" and "sensational forms" has proved particularly useful in elaborating the relationship between material forms and authenticity.

To refine the approach to the Nigerian house and hotel context, I draw on Karin Barber's argument that sensational forms in the Southern Nigerian context are intimately intertwined with ideas about money and wealth. The two dimensions – the degree of mysteriousness of the source of wealth, and the presence or absence of a property-owner's wealth – create a matrix. Based on this matrix, I identify three "aesthetics", which represent bundles of attitudes to houses and wealth: "money making", "money authenticating" and "money protecting".

Chapter 4: The Nollywood House and Hotel scenes

Introduction: Chapter 4

In the preceeding chapter I put forward the idea of experience-economy scenes and creative-industry clusters. This chapter argues that the emergence of the Nollywood House can be understood in terms of an interaction between the House scene and the Nollywood production cluster. An equivalent relationship is explored in the case of the Nollywood Hotel. In this story, the principal actors of the house and hotels scenes (i.e. the owners) attempted to imbue their properties with certain aesthetics through their interaction with the film production cluster. For their part, the film producers and marketers tried to use the houses and hotels as key inputs into their production processes. I therefore show how the scenes and clusters articulated together - sometimes in a fractious and unstable way and at other times in a more stable and easily complementary relationship - and explore how these dynamics generated innovation.

Emergence of the “Nollywood House Scene”

In the early 1990s, house owners in Enugu and its environs began to welcome film crews into their homes for use as movie sets. This constituted a major development in the local house scene, which therefore evolved into the “Nollywood House Scene”. In the theoretical introduction, we saw how owners often attempted to form their houses in an *aesthetic of money-authentication*. They hoped that by accommodating the film productions, this aesthetic would be accentuated through Nollywood’s reflexivity and elements of its star culture.

Turning first to the incorporation of reflexive practice, homeowners valued the ability of Nollywood to picture their houses - therefore opening up and projecting them to a wider audience. House owners who welcomed Nollywood argued that it allowed them to project their wealth, further highlighting that they had no need to be corrupt and to show that whatever they were doing was not out of financial necessity. The latter motivation was reflected in my interview with Benson Okonkwo, a homeowner¹, who wanted to show that he came from a moneyed background and was not acting out of desperation,

¹ Benson Okonkwo is both a homeowner and actor. The interview with him was conducted on 5 May 2017

[I wanted to show that] I was born with a silver spoon, I wanted them to come [inside the house] and see my background, and know that I'm not acting because it's my last option to make ends meet. That's why I brought them to come and shoot in the house, for them to see where I'm from, and know that without acting, I would still survive.

The reflexivity provided by Nollywood was therefore important in the sense that it allowed location homeowners to open their houses up to a wider audience. This practice led to an unintended consequence: the emulation of the houses' styles, with Nollywood houses starting to pop up throughout Igboland. The "Nollywood House Scene" therefore incorporated a far wider set of homes than just those being used for filming. The tendency towards emulation can be understood as part of a "detailed, appearance-centred mode of watching"². Meyer references this mode as an explanation of very similar emulation practices in Ghana, in which viewers would take inspiration from Ghanaian and Nigerian films for their clothing, interior furnishings and hairstyles. She argues that this practice could be seen in terms of a "symbolic – or one could better say metonymic seizure of that world", which was also similar to the case of "nesting" actors discussed below.³

Whilst some viewers copied the locations from the films' still-frames, others contacted the location managers to get more detailed pictures or to get the architect's contacts. Asaba location manager Chinedu Arinze had received many such requests, "not once, not twice", and reported that he had usually complied.⁴ Awka location manager Piccolo and Lagos location manager Remi had provided similar services. Location manager Piccolo recalled an example of his own family member copying a house in this way. After shooting the movie *Agony of the Widow*, he gave his uncle a copy of the film. Upon watching it, his uncle was struck by the main mansion featured in the story and requested that Piccolo give him the number of the house owner so that he could contact the architect. Piccolo attested that as a result, an exact replica of the *Agony of the Widow* house was built in his own village.⁵

This practice of emulation was especially popular amongst prospective homeowners living abroad who wanted to build a village house in a befitting style. Director Kennechukwu Okafor gave the example of his uncle who lived in the USA who watched a Nollywood movie on the

² Birgit Meyer, *Sensational Movies: Video, Vision, and Christianity in Ghana* (Oakland: California University Press, 2015), 105.

³ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 107.

⁴ Interview with Asaba location manager Chinedu Arinze, 14 December 2015

⁵ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye 20 December 2015

internet and was deeply impressed by the featured mansion, filmed in Asaba. He then called up Kennechukwu and instructed him to buy a copy of the movie locally (in Anambra State) and to give it to the contractor as a guide for the design of the new house in his home village.⁶ Asaba location manager Chinedu Arinze noted that a relatively high proportion of requests for house information had come from such foreign-based Nigerians.⁷

These practices were so common that some of the film locations' architectural features became widely incorporated in the local vernacular architectural vocabulary. Awka location manager Piccolo illustrated this trend with the example of a large bungalow in Asaba that was used as a location for the movie *More than a Widow*.⁸ The movie turned into a blockbuster and Piccolo reported that three or four identical bungalows appeared in Awka within the next few years, as well as sightings elsewhere in Anambra state. However, it was the more imposing location houses that had the greatest impact on architectural styles. The proliferation of one architectural feature in particular, the front-column-pediment structure with balcony - was strongly linked to the films.⁹



Fig 1. Nollywood House with front-column-pediment structure with balcony. Asaba, December 2015

⁶ Interview with Director Kennechukwu Okafor, 23 April 2017

⁷ Asaba location manager Chinedu Arinze, 14 December 2015

⁸ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye 20 December 2015

⁹ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye 20 December 2015.. For example, see interview with Alex Egbonike, 3 January 2016. He makes the point that the camera lingers on this part of the house in the movies, as well as the main reception room.

The second aspect incorporated into the house scene was the Nollywood star culture. The wives of the house owners would often theatrically welcome star actors into their homes. This phenomenon constitutes an example of glamorous people materializing in the here and now, creating a bridge to a luxurious metropolis. Certainly, as in Meyer's case, there were many exclamations of wonder that such people had arrived 'here!' Location manager Remi recalled such an exclamation, "Oh wow, so and so famous actor came to *my house* to shoot, ahhhh!", as did location manager Chiamaka, "Some [of the wives] will go straight... 'Who and who is coming to *my house*?'"¹⁰ These female homeowners attempted to consolidate the bridge by 'nesting' the actors and crew inside their houses. This nesting often involved preparing meals free of charge, making small parties and inviting their own friends to come and join in. Location manager Remi noted an example of a house that was much prized as a location by film directors due the exceptional food and hospitality offered by the house owner Folake Egbage.

Houses as inputs into Nollywood production

Turning now from the "Nollywood House Scene" to the "Nollywood Production Cluster", I explore how houses functioned as an input into the filmmaking process. The houses' key contribution to film production was that they provided shots of exteriors and interiors, which constituted a key part of Nollywood storylines (in many genres including both juju and glamour). The aspects they most often provided were the exteriors, the reception rooms and other downstairs parts of the houses.¹¹ House owners were usually more forthcoming in offering the exteriors compared to any of the interior rooms and they generally refused access to the bedrooms.¹² Therefore shots from different properties were often spliced together to represent one house in a film: shots from an exterior of one house would be spliced with the downstairs interior of another and with "bedroom" scenes shot in a hotel.

Hotel rooms, the main alternative to residential interior rooms, were generally seen as less convincing than real house rooms. I experienced such a judgement from the audience

¹⁰ Interviews with Lagos location manager Mrs Remi Ajibua-Ajayi, 27-May-17 and Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017.

¹¹ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

¹² Interviews with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017 and Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 17

perspective when watching the film *Ujukokora* in Lagos. My companion was impressed by the movie but felt let down that its low budget was given away by the lame attempt to pass off a sparse hotel room as the main character's bedroom. Indeed, bedroom scenes that give the sensation of a hotel ambience are considered to be a tell-tale sign of a shoddily-made, "not nice" movie.¹³

In addition to realistic shots, the large compounds also provided commodious working environments. At times they almost acted like mini-studios: the large enclosed spaces bounded by the compound walls (designed for celebrations and car-parking) could securely harbour wagons, bulky film equipment and working film crew. Whilst the director, cinematographer and in-scene actors were busy inside or near the front of the house, technical departments such as hair-and-make-up, set-and-prop men and off-scene actors work - or more often waiting - in these "back-stage" areas. The houses had large setbacks from the roads and these clear spaces were additionally helpful for shooting as they allowed enough distance for establishing shots and good camera angles, as well as buffering the interiors from noisy external environments.¹⁴

Apart from the houses' physical properties, favourable relationships with the homeowners also contributed to the comfort of these working environments. As we have seen, many homeowners were initially very hospitable to the film crews, even providing them with free food. It also benefitted filmmakers that many houses were not the owner's primary residences. In this sense, the buildings could be seen as valuable pieces of capital that had been working massively under-capacity until the filmmakers arrived. Whilst most village mansions were owned by non residents, even houses in regional centres like Enugu were often only the secondary residence after the main house in Lagos or Abuja. According to Awka Location manager Piccolo, the process for getting access to one of these auxiliary residences was therefore cordial and straightforward,

Most houses in Awka are [not occupied] All we have to do is put a call across to the person... or wait when he comes back, you introduce yourself, after introducing, if you have rapport, anytime you want to shoot, he will just give instruction, go and take the key from my brother or from my mother.¹⁵

¹³ Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 17; personal communication with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani following film viewing

¹⁴ Awka Location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye personal communication

¹⁵ Interview with Awka Location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

Many big men in Igboland were unsettled that their properties had been underutilized and seemed glad that they were finally being put to good use. Chief Anthony Okeke (Chief Tony) commented on his personal experience of this,

I spend one month in a year in [the village house] - just Christmas... So you ask me you want to use it? Why Not? Go knock yourself out! For me it's just a phone call [to the caretaker], 'Listen *Mr So-and-so* is coming there, he wants to shoot something there, clean up the place for him' and that's that!¹⁶

As a result, filmmakers could get easy, undisturbed access to many of the properties. This arrangement was particularly congenial because it meant they could film undisturbed by the owner. This was of immense value in production as filming in a house with the owner present was known to be awkward and potentially hazardous for the smooth running of the production.

In the 1990s, Nollywood benefited from the large supply of location houses - many of which were at little or no cost in the early days. This fed into a particular dynamic, in which Nollywood had a constant need for a supply of fresh houses. All the location managers emphasized that film directors did not like to repeat locations¹⁷ and were always on the lookout for new houses. This was fed by fear of a syndrome, caustically dubbed "Star houses"¹⁸, in which a location was so overused that it becomes instantly identifiable. As a result, the stock of location houses in any given area is exhaustible; this would later contribute to major industry developments, explored in depth below.

¹⁶ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹⁷ See, for example, Asaba Location Manger Chinedu Arinze; Enugu Location manager Chiamaka.

¹⁸ Interview with Awka Location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

Phase 2: Crisis in the “Nollywood House Scene”- “Nollywood Production Cluster” Relationship

Crisis

Despite the complementarities between the House Scene and the Nollywood Cluster, a multi-stranded crisis developed around 2008, leading to the severe restriction of house access in Enugu and the surrounding rural towns. By the time I conducted my research in 2015-2017, politician house-owners in Enugu had universally withdrawn from the scene, with their properties now considered “no-goes”¹⁹. Even politician house-owners with whom filmmakers had close connections would not allow access. Film Producer Princess was turned away by her “own uncles” who are politicians²⁰ and there was resignation when even Chairman Afam Okereke, an actor-director turned Enugu politician,²¹ would not allow his former colleagues access to his house.²²

On some occasions politicians behaved almost fearfully: “dashing”²³ location managers just to make the Nollywood people go away. Enugu Location manager Chiamaka experienced such behaviour on several occasions.²⁴ She would arrive at a politician’s house to propose its use as a location. The politician would ask her *‘I bu onye film?’* (are you a film person?), before asking her how much she could offer. Chiamaka would interpret this as the start of negotiations, “you will think ah, this man really is talking sense”, and offer him N20-30,000. However, he would proceed to hand *her* an amount several times that which she had quoted, on the condition that he would just be left alone, “ok, I will pay you fifty thousand naira... but forget about the house”.²⁵ In the past, such payments would not have been necessary and they did not become a convention until a later period (see Phase 3).

¹⁹ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

²⁰ Interview with CDGN Chairman Mrs Princess Ugo, 6 May 2017

²¹ Okereke is currently Chairman of Nkanu West Local Government Area in Enugu State

²² Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

²³ A dash is an informal payment or gift. It can include bribes but is a more inclusive category, covering both licit and illicit transactions.

²⁴ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

²⁵ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

I came across an example of this fear transforming into aggression in Enugu in April 2017 during production of the Genevieve Nnaji film *Lionheart*.²⁶ The film's producer was hoping to shoot in the house of a local politician so he drove to the property and the gateman allowed him entry as the driver was from the politician's village. The politician welcomed them in "because the driver started speaking dialect" and gave them food and drink. He appeared to be sympathetic to the idea of filming, telling them at the end that he would get back to them. However, shortly after they left, the politician made contact with the driver and issued a threat, demanding to know "why would you bring film people to the house!?"²⁷ and accused him of trying to expose him.

The changing attitudes often played out through particular family dynamics. Nollywood location managers gained access to the houses through a range of family members including the man, the children or the gateman. However, in the great majority of occasions, they would go through the wife.²⁸ In Enugu, the location management profession was entirely female, which may have had a bearing on these linkages.

A window into the linkage process is provided by Enugu Location Manager Chiamaka, who had a structured process for securing a location. First she would knock on the door with her script, before presenting her proposal to the woman of the house, who would often be waiting to hear "who and who is coming to my house?" or the amount on offer. The woman would then say that it is fine but that she would have to ask "Oga" (the husband), so Chiamaka should call again the next day. Chiamaka saw this consultation with the husband as a bargaining or delaying tactic, evocatively quoting a gateman of one such family, "don't mind her oh na she be the oga, na she dey determine, those ones wey she dey talk, she just dey use am." The next morning Chiamaka would ring the house to get confirmation before returning there to iron out the details with the wife.²⁹ The location managers believed that the husbands were usually aware of these arrangements, although I came across several instances when they were not.³⁰

²⁶ I was present on the set of the *Lionheart* in April 2017, and the filming was going on in Enugu through much of my stay here. This example was recounted to me by Enugu location manager Chiamaka and her husband, Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017.

²⁷ Interview with Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017.

²⁸ Interviews with Enugu Location managers Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017.

²⁹ Enugu Location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017.

³⁰ For example, see the case of House owner/actor Benson Okonkwo.

For the reasons discussed in the following account, many men no longer wanted their houses to be used for filming. As a result, they devised tactics to persuade their wives to cease their relationships with the industry. Ultimately the most effective of these was to outbid Nollywood - reimbursing their wives more than the amount the filmmakers would pay.

Chiamaka described a case in which the husband had offered the wife twice the amount she had received from the filmmakers. When Chiamaka called the woman to confirm the arrangement she answered, "I don't know oh, if my husband can pay me times two of what you're paying me, why will I now bring you people in?"

Understanding the crisis: Nollywood Houses as uncontrollable sensational forms

Rather than consolidating the houses as *money-authenticating* forms, Nollywood seemed to tip them into being *money-making* ones. They therefore turned out to be particularly uncontrollable sensational forms. Each of the three features of the Scene that were apparently *money-authenticating* and initially attractive (proof of real wealth, overpowering awesomeness and connection to a global cosmopolitan world) turned out to be *money-making* forms and therefore became disincentives. The homeowners' motivations for ceasing Nollywood access were therefore almost identical to those for opening up in the first place or - to put it another way - revealing the houses seemed to have the opposite effects to what had been intended. In each case, fundamental ambiguities that were pre-existing became aggravated by Nollywood's own aesthetic ambiguity. House-owners therefore rapidly switched from "revelation" (i.e. giving Nollywood access to their houses) to concealment.

First, Nollywood houses had been seen as an effective way to project wealth. However, house owners began to worry that the Nollywood presence could be interpreted as signs of financial desperation and therefore as a *money-making* form. This was partly fuelled by an awareness that Nollywood was increasingly a serious commercial business, rather than an amateurish semi-artistic student pursuit. In the early days the filmmakers had been just poor university arts students whom the Big Men were happy to give a leg up³¹ but over time, they became prosperous celebrities. As a result, a suspicion grew that opening a house to filmmakers was motivated by a desperation for cash.³² This confounded my initial assumption that the main risk of opening up these lavish interiors was of appearing too rich. I realized my mistake during

³¹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

³² See Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017.

an enlightening exchange with Benson Okonkwo about his father, a former Nollywood-house owner:

Benson: [My father] is a big man in this society, so he feels like it's a shameful thing for them to be using his house for locations

AB: Is that because it's not good to look too opulent...?

Benson: [interjects] No! [It's not good to look] too poor! He feels his house should be his privacy, and that the money is not big enough for him, and that he's bigger than that.³³

House owners were therefore worried that the Nollywood presence would give the impression that "I can't afford to feed my family or take care of myself so I'm using this house now to make a living..."³⁴ In the case of one of Chiamaka's locations, the owner was embarrassed when his friends started teasing him about his wife selling access to their house and therefore decided to halt access.³⁵

A second feature that turned out to be *money-making* rather than *authenticating* related to Nollywood associating the houses with corruption and occultism. Whereas the home owners' original intent was for the transparency of sharing access to allay fears of impropriety, it actually had the opposite effect.

A fundamental issue was that the Nollywood industry itself - and especially its star culture - was prone to flipping into the *money-making* form. This went beyond the fact that it had become a profitable business. The sudden emergence of Nollywood "superstars", as if from nowhere, parallels the 1970s arrival of the petro-Naira.³⁶ This fuelled an association of the industry with occultism and corruption. Noah Tsika, for example, argues that "given the conspicuous absence of a practical, communicable formula for becoming famous, the stars...

³³ Interview with House owner/actor Benson Okonkwo, 5 May 2017

³⁴ Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017.

³⁵ This development bears similarities to one described by Karin Barber in the Yoruba popular theatre in the early 1960s. In Barber's case, the Oyin Adejobi Theatre Company formally switched from amateur to professional in 1962, causing its formerly "public-spirited Christian elite" patrons to cut ties with a troupe that was now seen as *alagbe* (beggars). Karin Barber, *The Generation of Plays: Yorùbá Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

³⁶ Karin Barber, "Popular Reactions to the Petro-Naira," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20, no. 3 (1982): 431–450.

[were thought to] be in league with demons.”³⁷ Similarly, Jonathan Haynes has suggested that Nollywood was seen almost as a “get rich quick scheme” and that filmmakers were considered to have an uncannily deep knowledge of juju.³⁸ Alternatively, it was thought that actors engaged in excessive levels of “packaging” in order to succeed. For instance, Wale Oluwaleyimu observed that his friend, who had become a Nollywood actor, had “packaged himself so much that he has forgotten his real self.”³⁹ Actors and filmmakers fuelled these rumours themselves. Director Kenechukwu Okafor, for example, argued that there was “a whole lot of competition in the industry, so some people will [turn to the occult], to be above some people... so that they can rise to stardom.”⁴⁰

In addition to the stars’ sudden appearance, their often surprisingly rapid exit from the limelight contributed to these rumours. From around 2010, the older members of the first generation of Nollywood stars were entering their 60s and several died in relatively quick succession (in apparently mysterious circumstances). The death of actors who were known for acting in occultic movies, such as Ashley Nwosu, Justus Esiri and Enebeli Elebuwa, was considered to be especially suspicious.

At the same time as film people’s activities off-set, the scenes within the movies were also considered to be troubling. The style of cinematography played a role in tipping the architecture from the *money-authenticating* to the *money-making* aesthetic. Set-designer and Architect Leo Spartani observed that the exaggerated shooting angles were “almost like... Citizen Kane”⁴¹. Despite technological limitations, Jedlowski argues that the films effectively convey a kind of “hyper-realism”⁴² and at times portray the practices “as if some of these things work.”⁴³ The films also explicitly linked *Ogwu-ego* (blood money) with the big houses.

³⁷ Noah A. Tsika, *Nollywood Stars: Media and Migration in West Africa and the Diaspora* (Indiana University Press, 2015), 7.

³⁸ Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), 18. These observations suggest that the inherently high market unpredictability of creative industries - what Richard Caves calls their “nobody knows” quality has an innate affinity with the “money-making aesthetic”.

³⁹ Interview with Events manager Akinwale Oluwaleyimu, 6 June 2017

⁴⁰ Interview with Director Kenechukwu Okafor, 23 April 2017

⁴¹ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016.

⁴² See Alessandro Jedlowski, “Videos in Motion: Processes of Transnationalization in the Southern Nigerian Video Industry: Networks, Discourses, Aesthetics” (PhD Thesis, Università di Napoli L’Orientale”, 2012).

on “melodramatic realism” and Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, on “animation” of the occult in Ghanaian and Nigerian movies

⁴³ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

Many depicted blood-money rituals taking place inside secret parts of the houses - a plot element that Haynes describes as Nollywood's "hallmark"⁴⁴. They often showed secret rooms containing the sacrificial shrines as well as sarcophaguses for the money-spewing bodies.

Although the movies were presented as purely simulations of the evil practices, Meyer has argued that the revelation of the occult, although ostensibly for the purpose of exposing it, can actually be seen as collaboration with it. She gives the example of the film *Pastors Club* in which actors, who were actually real pastors, play the characters of immoral clergymen who welcome inappropriately dressed women into their church. This created uncertainty over whether the actors and filmmakers had in fact fallen under the spell of the devil.⁴⁵

Meyer acknowledges attempts on film sets to avoid invoking the "real thing", such as praying before transgressive scenes or constructing "shrines" in a deliberately artificial way.⁴⁶

However, confidence in these procedures was limited: "what started as fictional representation, set up in front of the camera, could create a presence of its own that was even more visually and acoustically compelling than the reality it initially set out to represent." This belief was reflected in the dark rumours that pervaded film sets. Meyer cites the case of an unknown actress who suddenly turned up to play a ghost in a cemetery scene who was then never seen again (i.e. the film had beckoned a ghost to come on-set to play herself) and other cases of actors becoming possessed after playing evil characters. In my own case study,⁴⁷ Okafor reported that the crew "experienced so many [spiritual] attacks on set"; for example, Obi Okoli - a usually reliable actor - kept mysteriously forgetting his lines.⁴⁸ In another example, the set designer Sean Israel was contacted by a viewer wanting to know the source of the antiques in the shrine he had made. However Sean suspected his intentions, "I know where he's coming from, he doesn't actually want a decoration, I just find something to tell him... just trying to throw him off guard and move on."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Jonathan Haynes, *Nollywood: The Creation of Nigerian Film Genres* (University of Chicago Press, 2016), 25. Haynes does emphasise that in recent years this has begun to change.

⁴⁵ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 178. The ambiguity was so great that they actors had to record a special segment at the end of the movie in which they clarified that they played these roles purely for the purpose of alerting their congregations to the true devilishness of Mami Wata.

⁴⁶ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 232. such as using red paint instead of blood, using only newly carved masks - nothing dirty (that might contain a spirit), constructing a fibreglass human skull even when real ones were available in the market.

⁴⁷ I saw cases of electricity fluctuations being attributed to similar forces

⁴⁸ Interview with Director Kenechukwu Okafor, 23 April 2017

⁴⁹ Interview with set designer Sean Israel, 23 December 2015.

All of these concerns have been reflected in a rather self-incriminating meta-genre of films depicting Nollywood people involved in juju practices. The 2013 film “Devil’s Contract”, for example, shows the industry as being deeply intertwined with occultism and its stars as belonging to secret societies. The film’s director Kenekchukwu Okafor explained that the film was inspired by the mysterious death of the famous actors in the previous years and that he wanted to expose the truth. He believed that the marketers were part of secret societies and that from the beginning of the industry they had been rigging the market,

The marketers might be manipulating the productions and life of the actors, planning how to influence the movie industry... there are some devil syndicates amongst us, that tries to manipulate what is going on. The founders of the industry - they were the main manipulators.

He also believed that individual actors in the industry would similarly engage the occult to catapult themselves to stardom:

Even the crews and actors, they visit spiritual houses to get powers to compete in the industry, whether they are actors or actresses, whether they are producers, 80% of them engage in spiritual activities... to boost their career and to make the movie a success!⁵⁰

The films in this genre were well received by the public (Okafor reported selling 400,000 copies of Part 1 of his 4-part film in 2013) and might further have fuelled the rumours. Following the success of *Devils Contract*, similarly-themed movies have been released, with the big-budget *Jujuwood*, starring superstar Funke Akindele, focusing on the diabolic practices of Nollywood actresses.

In a somewhat similar vein, opening up houses through filmmaking could project an appearance of temporal corruption. This was particularly contentious for politicians as corruption became an increasingly emotive issue in the political sphere. The emergence of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)⁵¹ saw huge crack-downs on opposition and out-of-favour politicians on charges of graft, leading to a culture of fear. Often the mere existence of cash or lavish material wealth inside a house was taken as sufficient evidence for arrest and confiscation of property, as well as salacious leaks to media outlets. House owners were particularly concerned about the tendency for wealthy diaspora Nigerians watching the

⁵⁰ Interview with Director Kenekchukwu Okafor, 23 April 2017

⁵¹ The commission was launched in 2003 and has been active in investigating politicians since 2006.

films abroad to become outraged and tip off the EFCC.⁵² These diaspora figures were known to be highly vocal about perceived corruption and were prone to “kicking up a high-level fuss”⁵³ if they saw evidence of squandermania back home.⁵⁴

Houses as input into production process

During this phase, the breakdown of the Nollywood house scene was the main driver for the crisis. In terms of a production input, Nollywood filmmakers still needed houses to make their films, and their demand was actually increasing. However, the worsening of relations with the home owners did compromise the value of the houses as a production input.

It became increasingly fraught to film in locations with the owner present. Awka Location Manager Piccolo described a stifling sense of being under surveillance to the point that the crew felt paranoid, and recalled bitterly an owner who had pounced on him after a crew member stepped on some flowers.⁵⁵ Moreover, film-makers were increasingly frustrated with the imposed severe time restrictions on the length of shoots in the owner-occupied locations. Whilst the complex co-ordination of resources in filmmaking generally demands very long working days (up to 24 hours in the Nollywood case⁵⁶), shooting in a living house had to fit around family routines. Resident house-owners became less tolerant, demanding that filmmakers leave their property by 7-8pm⁵⁷ and would not always allow access on weekends.⁵⁸ Location Manager Chiamaka recalled several extremely stressful situations in which the relationship with the owner became frayed due to a feeling that the crew had overstayed its welcome. She recalled one occasion when a house owner decided to cease access mid-shoot and another in which the house owner’s wife unleashed her children, encouraging them to make a racket, in a bid to force them out.⁵⁹

⁵² Interview with Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017

⁵³ Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

⁵⁴ Interview with Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017

⁵⁵ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

⁵⁶ See interview with set designer Uzoma Mike Ebuka, 4 June 17 on case of sets of Ojuju, O-Town.

⁵⁷ See Interview with Asaba Location manager Chimeze Bright, 15 December 2015; Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015;

⁵⁸ Asaba location manager Chinedu Arinze; Lagos location manager Mrs Remi Ajibua-Ajayi, 27 May 2017

⁵⁹ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

Concealment: reverting to “aesthetics of protection”

The homeowners now realized that Nollywood had conveyed an unwanted *aesthetics of money-making*. Instead of authenticating their wealth, Nollywood had heightened the suspicion of Nollywood houses and their owners. Buffy Okeke, for example, described how his family came under suspicion due to the similarity of his father’s house and cars with those in *Living in Bondage* and its sequels. He remembered bitterly being stigmatized at school as a result of these concerns. Other proud home owners who had provided their houses as locations were shocked at the films’ outcomes,

The person who dropped [provided] this house, who supported the film project was like, “Na my house, I love it. [and after seeing the film:] So they used my house to insult!”⁶⁰

Lady Justice Mary Ukaego Odili, who had previously been an enthusiastic Nollywood house owner, was similarly disillusioned, simply commenting “If you want me to be completely honest with you, I do not allow Nollywood people into my house anymore!”⁶¹

Moreover, Nollywood had compromised the houses’ *aesthetics of money-protection*: it had made them vulnerable to assaults by both occultic and ‘anti-corruption’ forces. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission could use the film footage directly in prosecutions, asking the owners to prove “how did [they] make such amount of money to have such a structure?”⁶² or be used to catch them out on tendentious technicalities, such as if the property was not officially declared.⁶³ There was also a concern that the films could be used by policemen to familiarize themselves with the layout of the house and “plan how to assault such a premise on a political-military basis.”⁶⁴ Lastly, many house owners feared that the filmmakers themselves could be agents working for political rivals who would hand over photographs to the EFCC⁶⁵ or use this material to engage in blackmail⁶⁶,

If you're not the kind of man that has anything to hide, you will be open to

⁶⁰ Interview with Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

⁶¹ Interview with Judge Mary Ukaego Odili, 12 May 2017

⁶² Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

⁶³ Interview with Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017

⁶⁴ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017. This also echoed concerns that non-state criminal elements could use the footage in similar ways.

⁶⁵ Interview with CDGN Chairman Mrs Princess Ugo, 6 May 2017

⁶⁶ Interview with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

[Nollywood] but... because of the possibility of blackmail, people tend to watch their backs when you have people coming into you because one thing or the other could be used against you in future so most politicians because of their kind of lifestyle tend to hold back or close their doors to such gestures.⁶⁷

The politician homeowners hoped to improve the situation by retreating into the shells of the houses and blocking Nollywood's access. They therefore re-enforced the "aesthetics of protection" - closing up the houses and increasing the buffering around the perimeters. Location Manager Piccolo illustrated the emerging paranoia, even about people just taking photographs near the exteriors,

Nobody goes into the house [which had formerly been used for shooting], unless [the owner] is around, in fact, there was a time I wanted to shoot there. I saw the house, I will like to speak with the man, they say you can't, so later I got the number, called the man..., the man said 'No! nobody goes in...' in fact nobody even snaps, if you snap the house, whatever you take, he grabs... he took off.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Interview with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

⁶⁸ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

Phase 3. Reactions to the crisis

1. Commodification of domestic space

The challenges posed by this situation prompted a series of innovations. Whilst the Nollywood House Scene fractured, filmmakers' needs for locations still grew. One result was the commodification of domestic space in Enugu, as homeowners demanded high fees for its use. The house owners' changing attitude was often described in terms of them becoming more "exposed" or "educated". This could be interpreted as a kind of *aesthetics of money-making* as they were openly using the houses to raise money. House owner Benson Okonkwo described this process,

When they used to come for locations, we would allow them to shoot, but when we became intelligent, and knew you could make money from this, we started asking for money and the price[whistles with increasing pitch and volume] hwoo-yooo!⁶⁹

The commodification process proceeded through a series of thresholds. Starting with the locations provided for free and even with hospitality, there was a transition to a period in which token payments were expected. Location Manager Remi described handing the owners envelopes containing small sums "for the kids", or giving out loose change for the maids and gatemen to buy recharge cards and other sundry items. However, by around 2008, securing a location involved a conventional market-style bargaining process: "you sit down with the owner: it's now a business thing [knocks knuckle hard on table]!"⁷⁰. By 2017, the price per day for a good location in Enugu was widely cited at N30-N40,000, rising to N50,000 for one of the most desired houses (as corroborated by both the location-manager and house owner).⁷¹

Although the main driver of this change came from the fracturing of the Nollywood House Scene (i.e. from the side of the homeowners), the filmmakers themselves were often fairly encouraging of the development. Location managers found that formalizing the relationship with the house owners reduced the stressfulness of filming and made it more stable. Particularly when filming in houses where the owner was present, they felt that they no longer were at constant risk of being told to leave at the owners' whim. By 2017, Location Manager

⁶⁹ Interview with House owner/actor Benson Okonkwo, 5 May 2017

⁷⁰ Lagos location manager Mrs Remi Ajibua-Ajayi, 27 May 2017

⁷¹ Interviews with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015; Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; house owner/actor Benson Okonkwo, 5 May 2017

Chiamaka would not accept any offers of free access to houses, so if the owner started to disturb the production, she would straight away refer to their contract: “but we bargained on something, oh! I’m shooting every day to pay this amount.”⁷²

2. Nollywood House Scene became mobile- relocated to nearby cities

Second, the Nollywood House Scene became mobile, relocating to Asaba and later other regional cities. In around 2008, many film producers started moving their productions to Asaba, the capital of Delta State. By the time I commenced my research there in December 2015, it was estimated that as many as 60% of all Nigerian productions were using Asaba locations.

Nollywood House Scene in Asaba

In many senses, the Nollywood House Scene was able to re-establish in Asaba in the same way it had done in Enugu fifteen years earlier. Asaba Location managers reported similar interactions with house owners as the earlier ones in Enugu and they received free access to many Asaba properties in addition to hospitality.

In fact, the Nollywood House Scene took root as an *aesthetics of money-authentication* far more successfully in Asaba than it had done in Enugu. The location managers spoke of the “special appreciation” and “love” that the Asaba big men had for Nollywood and that they were less sceptical and more enthusiastic about getting exposure than those in Enugu. This sentiment was sometimes expressed in a more negative way: that the Deltan house owners were less educated and more “bush” than the sophisticated Enugu elite.⁷³ Location managers reported lavish parties and large numbers of extended family members assembling to meet the cast and crew. Certainly it seems that for the Asaban house owners, welcoming film actors was an essential way to connect with a global, cosmopolitan world, whereas the Enugan owners might have had a wider range of possibilities.

In order to fully understand the strength of the Nollywood House Scene in Asaba compared to Enugu, the different political cultures of the two cities must also be acknowledged. Unlike Enugu, which had been a regional capital since the colonial period, Asaba (and the elites that assembled there) were relatively new - the state and capital had only been created in 1991. Whilst the “lack of exposure” may have been the overarching factor, there was also an official

⁷² Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

⁷³ Interview with Art director Bedford Baloebi, 10 June 2015

state government policy to support the film industry under Delta State Governor Emmanuel Uduaghan (2007-2015). This may have reduced the personal risks for politicians to offer their houses for use by filmmakers. As a result, the reticence shown by politician house owners towards Nollywood in Enugu was not repeated in Asaba - they were at least as likely to offer their houses as any other type of owner. Indeed, during my Asaba research, several of the locations belonged to politicians, including one owned by a Senator. We can reflect that this contrasted with the situation in Enugu, where Nollywood's presence compromised the houses' security and therefore contributed to the extreme swing to the *aesthetics of protection*.

As a factor input into the Nollywood production process, Asaba houses also had some special advantages over those in Enugu. The city had not previously been used for location filming so it was able to offer properties that had not been seen before. This advantage was magnified due to Asaba being a newly created state capital (with the proceeding building boom ensuring an expanded supply of big new houses)⁷⁴ and was further aided by a plentiful supply of cheap land on the outskirts of the city that was rapidly bought up and built on by wealthy Onitsha merchants.⁷⁵

Asaba also had an advantage because it provided comprehensive access to exactly the right mix of locations needed to shoot a Nollywood movie. This was due to its geography as a compact, "modern" city surrounded by a relatively underdeveloped hinterland. Villages such as Okpanem, Umunede, and Illah, were considered perfect locations for shooting authentic village scenes, which were essential elements in the juju, royal, epic and even glamour genres.

Finally, the excellent house access was part of a wider package of benefits that Asaba offered the Nollywood industry. Under Governor Uduaghan, the film industry received a number of state-level perks. These included permission to shoot in the new local airport and the use of police escorts and equipment (such as guns) as props. This was refreshing for film practitioners who were more used to police harassment than assistance.

Further relocation

Despite its special strengths, the Asaba Nollywood House Scene has ultimately been vulnerable to many of the same problems experienced in Enugu. As in Enugu, Asaban domestic space

⁷⁴ Interview with Enugu Location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

⁷⁵ Interview with Enugu Location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

eventually became commoditized from around 2011 and was approaching price parity with Enugu by 2017.⁷⁶ In addition, the supply of new location houses in Asaba has begun to run out, with the “Star House” syndrome now severely affecting the town’s house location stock. Awka Location Manager Piccolo complained that “in Asaba, you see a location, you know it’s Senator Obi’s house... someone can list 30 movies that have been shot in that location”, a view that was corroborated by Enugu Location Manager Chiamaka, “if you see twenty Asaba movies, you will see one location in eighteen of them”.⁷⁷

Since 2013, the Nollywood House Scene and Production cluster have again begun to move to new regional locations. These include the nearby Anambra state capital of Awka and also the rural towns and villages in hinterlands of Asaba, Awka and Onitsha, such as Nibo, Oba, Obosi, Umuoji, Awka-Etiti and Nnobi.⁷⁸

From 2011, Awka has emerged as a dynamic and rapidly growing location centre. Whilst it is not yet rivalling Asaba, it has experienced rapid growth: from near-zero in 2011, to over 40 films shot in 2015, with six films in simultaneous production on the day of my arrival in December 2015. The houses are not free, but they are vastly cheaper than in Enugu or Asaba. A standard duplex, which would cost N10-N15,000 per day in Asaba, would just require a token amount of N1,000-2,000 in Awka; whilst a top-level location, which would cost N50,000 in Enugu or Asaba, would cost N5,000-N10,000 in Awka.⁷⁹ The city is located in a particularly wealthy region in Igboland, and provides access to wealthy “rural towns” such as Awka-Etiti, Nibo, Oba and Osuamiobia. Although the city does not have the same special affinities with Nollywood as Asaba, its cause has been helped hugely by its championing by pioneering Location Manager Piccolo.

Considering these developments, we can begin to trace the geographical pattern of this evolution of location shooting. With Onitsha as the centre Nollywood marketing, the movement has followed the nearest capitals (and hinterlands) that surround this city. With the expansion of Nollywood into Awka, we can therefore see the emergence of a Nollywood

⁷⁶ There was a period in which Asaba houses were considered to cost about half of Enugu houses, but nowadays the proportion seems to be around 75% - see Interview with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; Location manager Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

⁷⁷ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

⁷⁸ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Director Kennechukwu Okafor, 23 April 2017; Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015

⁷⁹ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015.

Triangle of Enugu, Asaba and Awka (with Onitsha at its centre); although this will perhaps become a quadrangle with the emergence of shooting around Owerri.

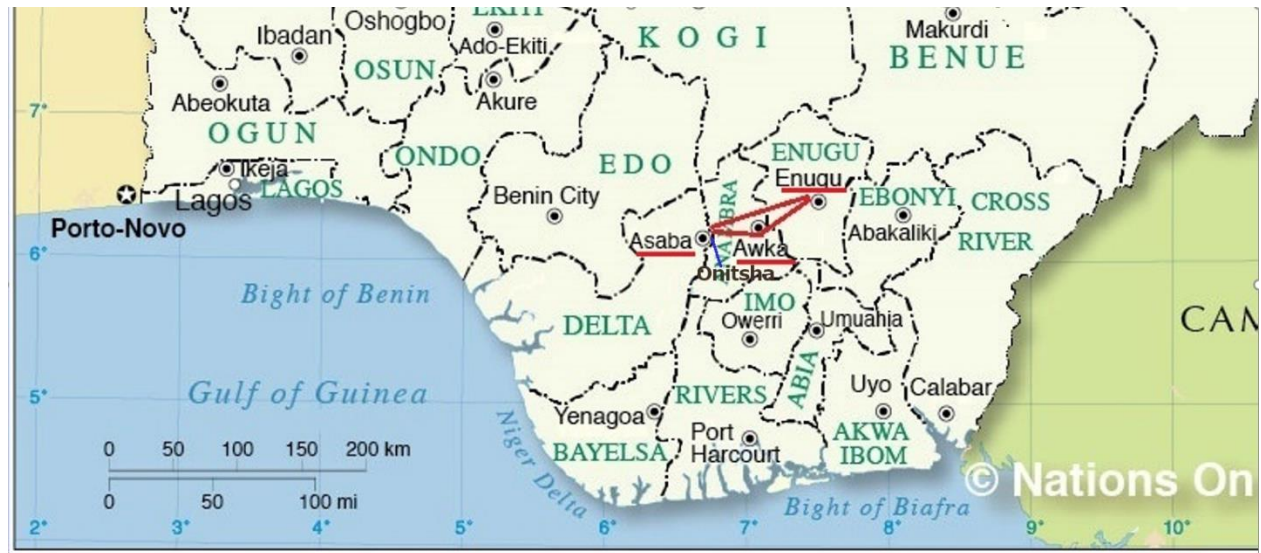


Fig. 2. The Nollywood Triangle of location filming centres.

3. Emergent spaces

Lastly, entirely new types of spaces were created, melding together aspects of film studios and living residences. New housing estates sprang up that closely integrated Nollywood both into their forms and business models. Amen Estate, established in Lagos in 2008, is a cutting-edge example, which has taken this integration to new levels. In Amen, film crews are allowed to shoot and lodge in houses until they are sold, before adding more location-houses to the development.

As factor-inputs into Nollywood production, these estates offered several advantages. They provided a high-end ambience (including both the houses and the environment of a gated-community) at a relatively low price. In the cutting-edge Amen Estate, they also provided free electricity. Whereas Nollywood crews would previously need to carry mobile generators and pay for fuel, here they could connect to the estate's own grid (powered by a much more efficient central generator.)

Amen's version of the "Nollywood House Scene" represents a highly distinctive sensational form. Prior to Nollywood filming at Amen, the estate owners were having great trouble selling

the plots. The main problem was that potential buyers, many of whom lived abroad, questioned whether the estate was actually real. The owner, Babatunde Gbadamosi, would send marketing material with photographs of the houses only to receive accusations that the estate was either not in Nigeria or was somehow made up, “[they] write us back insulting us, say fraudsters, Nigerian fraudsters have come again, 419...”⁸⁰ One potential client asserted that he knew the estate, and that it was located in the outskirts of Atlanta, Georgia! Mr Gbadmosi resorted to having the houses re-photographed with himself appearing in-frame. However, this still did not convince the customers, with some even implying that he had used Photoshop to create an optical effect.



Fig. 3. A street in Amen Estate

Allowing Nollywood productions to film proved a turning point for the estate. Amazingly, it actually succeeded in convincing buyers of its realness:

Getting Nollywood and the music industry to come shoot their movies and their musical videos here was our way of sort of getting people to realize that actually you know what... this is actually real... you know,

⁸⁰ Interview with estate owner Babatunde O. Gbadamosi, 30 May 2017. The term “419” is used in Nigeria to refer specifically to advance-fee fraud but is also commonly applied to describe any fraudulent activity. The word originates in section 419 of the Nigerian penal code, which relates to fraud.

these houses are actually there and it's actually in Nigeria!⁸¹

Somewhat unintuitively, it had been necessary to create a Nollywood fantasy world in order to prove the realness/authenticity of the estate. This constitutes a new type of Nollywood House Scene in which the *aesthetics of authentication* really worked.⁸² The confusion over what was fictional and what was not contributed to the effect. Mr Gdabmosi gave the example of people telephoning out of concern for Iyabo (a Nollywood actress), "ah I saw Iyabo at Amen estate, she was standing on a balcony and she almost died!" He responded, "yes, yes, yes - that's just the story line, you know".⁸³ But the key point was that this somehow resulted in the desirable outcome, "ultimately, you know, what all that says is that Amen estate is ultimately real!"

Mr Gdabmosi explained that they stumbled across this effect by accident, after allowing a music video production and a couple of films featuring Yomi Gold and Iyabo Ojo onto the estate. He noted that in these first productions, the intrusion of visual cues from the environment helped to subconsciously reinforce the Nigerianess of the scenes. He gave the example of a scene with a simple clothing line in the background, which he described as "Nigerianism right there!" as he didn't consider such lines as still typical of the UK or America. Following this finding, he orchestrated (without the knowledge of the filmmakers and musicians) for further visual cues to accidentally-on-purpose intrude into the scenes. These included "female domestics" to walk past in the background, making the viewer think "wait a minute, that's not the average English pedestrian!", or for cars with Nigerian licence plates to drive by.

The relationship with Nollywood had a significant impact on the interior decoration of the houses. When the estate was first built, all rooms were designed in beige and neutral pastel colours. However, through the influence of a Nollywood location manager, the rooms in a few of the houses were given bright, distinctive matching colour schemes for the walls, bedspreads and soft furnishings. This was necessary for the productions to give strong visual cues that scenes were taking place in different rooms. The features turned out to be very popular with the estate's clients when they came to view ex-location houses, and the owner therefore decided to incorporate this style into all new houses built on the estate.

⁸¹ Interview with estate owner Babatunde O. Gbadamosi, 30 May 2017

⁸² In Meyer's examples of Juju films, the filmmakers took precautions to prevent replication invoking the reality (of an occult). However, here we see the opposite: there was an active drive for the imaginary world of the films to bring the estate to life.

⁸³ Interview with estate owner Babatunde O. Gbadamosi, 30 May 2017



Figs. 4 & 5. Colour-co-ordinated room interiors in Amen Estate



Emergence of the Nollywood Hotel Scene

Phase 1: Early Hotel Scene c.1978-1985

A “hotel scene” existed in Enugu from the late 1970s. Prior to this period, the city’s hotel landscape had been limited and was made up of the crumbling colonial-era Catering Guest Retreat, the regional-government-owned Presidential Hotel (built 1961-2)⁸⁴, and a multitude of tiny family-run “guest houses”⁸⁵. In the late 1970s and early 1980s a new breed of large hotels emerged (which I term, “the first generation”) including the Hotel Metropole⁸⁶, Zodiac and Modotels.⁸⁷ I conducted a detailed case-study on the Zodiac Hotel, which was launched to great fanfare in June 1979 and became a dominant feature in Enugu’s cultural landscape in the 1980s⁸⁸. In this section, I argue that this generation of hotels employed a “money-authenticating” aesthetic.

In a similar way to the big houses, these hotels made up part of the image of awesomeness of the Igbo “aristocrats”. Chief Tony described his hotel as being part of “a life of style”⁸⁹ that also included specific cues such as the family-owned kennel of Great Danes, horse riding and a polo field. The hotel’s exterior was styled to convey this awesomeness, with bright coloured lighting and an impressive marquee that gave “an ambiance that was really breathtaking.”⁹⁰ Hotels from that period were considered so awesome that their owners were described to me in televisual terms:

Prior to cable television in Nigeria... one of the businesses the quickest to get popular was if you owned a hotel because everyone that came into a city or a

⁸⁴ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017, hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017, Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudo, 20 April 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017. Until 1967, Nigeria was divided into three geo-political regions: the Northern Region, the Western Region and the Eastern Region (of which Enugu was the capital)

⁸⁵ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017

⁸⁶ Michael Widjaja, *Nnöö-Welcome to Enugu: An Insight Guide to Igboland’s Culture and Language* (Enugu, Nigeria: Kongrats Press, 2001), 78

⁸⁷ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017, hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017, Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudo, 20 April 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017

⁸⁸ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

⁸⁹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

⁹⁰ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

state knew of the hotel.⁹¹

The first generation of hotels were held in such high esteem that they had the capacity to “tune” the local population, making them “resonate” with the hotels⁹². Meyer uses this concept of “tuning” to describe forms that stimulate metonymic repetition.⁹³ For example, Chief Tony Okeke titled himself Zodiac’s “Executive Director”, which at the time was a little-known appellation compared to the more common “Chairman” or “Managing Director”. This title was soon translated into pidgin as “Exece” and was incorporated into popular songs to mean, “boss”. Chief Tony quoted the lyrics to a local chorus from that time as, “Chineke [God] has made the son of a poor man into Exece!” Similarly, local businesses incorporated the Zodiac name into their own trademarks, with a “Zodiac Barbershop” appearing, and the early actor-filmmaker Zebrudaya registering his first production company under the name “Zodiak”.

A key element of these first-generation hotels was the incorporation of high-tech communications technologies. These contributed to the “image of awesomeness” and also provided a bridge to the “global, cosmopolitan, world of consumption”. From the Zodiac’s launch it included a colour television in each room and was the first hotel in Igboland to have telex and fax machines. Colour television in particular held an enormous power for Nigerians at that point in time.⁹⁴ Another similarly overawing feature was the introduction of satellite television at the Zodiac in 1986-7, which brought American, British, South African and Soviet entertainment channels to guests who had previously only had exposure to local stations.⁹⁵

Phase 2: c. 1985 - c.1996

By the mid-1980s, there was a massive proliferation of hotels in Enugu, with around 50 hotels

⁹¹ Interview with Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

⁹² The following two examples are solely based on interviews with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017, the owner of Zodiac Hotel - I would ideally like to verify them with independent sources who were active in the cultural life of Enugu in the 1980s.

⁹³ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, pp. 122 and 124.

⁹⁴ Mr Bedford proclaimed that it was the “biggest thing to ever happen in Nigerian television!” and spoke movingly about the excitement he felt about the arrival of his first colour TV on Christmas Eve 1980.

⁹⁵ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

at this time.⁹⁶ These included large hotels like The Danik, The Gemini Inn⁹⁷, Hotel Cordial⁹⁸, The Astoria⁹⁹, The Royal Palace¹⁰⁰, Davide Suites and the Brown and Brown Events Centre¹⁰¹, as well as a host of smaller bed-and-breakfast accommodations, which rapidly emerged, like “mushrooms”.¹⁰²

This proliferation represented the hotel scene’s transformation: from the *aesthetics of money authenticating* to one of *money-making*. The “first generation” hotels had been the most prominent parts of much larger business groups, often owned by well-established Eastern dynasties that Chief Tony described as the “landed gentry”¹⁰³. The Zodiac, for example, was part of the Okeke-Ojiudu family’s Peenok Investments group that had large real estate holdings as well as a hospital. Similarly, Modotels was part of Dr Alex Ekwueme’s group, ‘Ekwueme Associates’, which included an architectural practice, a roofing materials plant, a brewery and a steel-rolling mill.¹⁰⁴ These hotels were prestige businesses sitting on top of larger business groups. Buffy Okeke-Ojiudu likened them to a magnate’s investment in an English Premier League football club. In addition, the high profile of hotels was related to the owners’ political ambitions. Alex Ekwueme, for example, used the hotel to bolster his venture into politics¹⁰⁵; and Chief Tony’s own father, chief PK Okeke, who used his hotel to signify the family’s exit from

⁹⁶ This figure comes from an internal study hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu did of the Enugu hotel environment in 1985.

⁹⁷ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; Ify Ogakwu, *Focus on Enugu State: The Coal City State* (Enugu, Nigeria: Inselberg (Nig.), 1996),

⁹⁸ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; Ogakwu, *Focus on Enugu State*

⁹⁹ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; *Nigerian Hotel and Travel Guide*. (Lagos: Concept Publications, 1985).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; *Nigeria Transport, Aviation & Tourism Information Handbook, Directory & Who’s Who*. (Lagos: Media Research Co., 1988); Ogakwu, *Focus on Enugu State*.

¹⁰¹ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017. Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi has authored a PhD in which she conducted a comprehensive analysis of hotels in the city (with particular attention on their energy use patterns)

¹⁰² Hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu claimed that these smaller “hotels” would offer as few as 5-10 rooms, interview 12 May 2017.

¹⁰³ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹⁰⁴ See Tom Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 168; also Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017; Tom Forrest provides several other examples of similar groups that started hotels at this time including those of Mathias Nwafor Ugochukwu and Cletus Ibeto.

¹⁰⁵ Ekwueme was the vice-president of the Second Republic 1979-1982.

politics¹⁰⁶ (which had become so strongly associated with corruption that the family needed “a new brand”).¹⁰⁷

Whereas the first generation of hotels had, in reality, been an outward manifestation of wealth (an *aesthetics of money-authentication*) they were interpreted by the new-entrant hotel owners as the source of the whole wealth (an *aesthetics of money-making*). The new owners “assumed that all this money that the family was making came from the hotel, so they said ‘you know what? I’m going to build my hotel too!’”¹⁰⁸. Chief Tony thought that the assemblage of the hotel and the ‘aristocratic’ lifestyle (such as the Great Danes) around it confused this “second generation” of owners into thinking that everything emanated from the hotel,

[The new hotel owners] grew up seeing Buffy [his son] riding horses in the street with the grooms with him, they grew up seeing the Great Danes, playing polo at the polo field... so when you see people living that kind of a life... because the one that is obvious to you is the hotel, you feel everything was made there.¹⁰⁹

As a result, a second generation of hotel owner without the social recognition of their predecessors entered the industry. Andrew Apter describes these new hotel builders as a “nouveaux riches” who were outside the old hierarchy of families of “colonial civil servants and lawyers with school ties to London and Oxbridge.”¹¹⁰

Although the new hotels looked quite similar to those of the first generation, they flipped into the *aesthetics of money-making*. Architecturally, the new owners engaged in quite blatant measures to copy the established hotels - including photographing the interiors and exteriors of the Zodiac Hotel and producing replicas - “down to the bar set-up, the restaurant, everything....”¹¹¹ They initially succeeded in earning large profits, which reinforced the *money-*

¹⁰⁶ Chief PK Okeke had been the Minister for Agriculture in the First Republic, 1960-1966.

¹⁰⁷ Another possible example of this phenomenon could be Mathias Nwafor Ugochukwu, who also started a hotel at this time and was closely involved with Ekwueme during his time in power.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹⁰⁹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

¹¹⁰ Andrew Apter, *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2005), 231 Akachi Odoemene, “Fighting Corruption without the State: Civil Society Agency and the ‘Otokoto Saga,’” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 25, no. 3 (2012): 475–503, describes a remarkably similar group in Owerri.

¹¹¹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudu, 12 May 2017

making imagery and attracted even more to enter the business.¹¹² Whilst the first generation of hotel owners had used the hotels to enhance their own image, the new hoteliers were notable for being less interested in doing this, even shying away from the limelight¹¹³. Instead, they focused on the hotels as a source that could independently generate money.¹¹⁴ Although the majority of my evidence relates to Enugu, the same pattern has been observed by Akachi Odoemene in his study of Owerri, where there was a quite sudden arrival of a “nouveaux riches” who built new hotels in the town from the beginning of the 1990s.¹¹⁵

The *money-making* aesthetic of the new hotels was exaggerated through a series of occult-related scandals that hit the hospitality industry in this period, the most notorious of which was the “Otokoto Incident”.¹¹⁶ The Otokoto Hotel was one of the leading hotels in Owerri when the beheaded body of an abducted 11-year old boy was discovered buried on its grounds in September 1996. Rumours soon spread that other bodies had been discovered under the hotel, leading to riots in the city and the destruction of the Otokoto as well as other hotels. This event stoked further rumours that hoteliers across Igboland were using the properties as part of occultic practices, burying bodies in the grounds to make money. In the years since, the word “Otokoto” has transitioned into a popular folk term to refer to the general juju-powers possessed by hotels. Although this caused trepidation amongst clientele, it also appeared to contribute to a surge in hoteliers – apparently attracted to the perceived opportunity – starting new hotels from the late 1990s.¹¹⁷

The emergence of the second-generation hotels as a *money-making aesthetic* can be illuminated with reference to Karin Barber’s work on explorations of the sources of wealth in Nigerian popular culture. As we saw in the theoretical introduction,¹¹⁸ Barber argued that there

¹¹² See: Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017, Interview with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

¹¹³ See Interviews with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; Enugu Location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹¹⁴ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017;

¹¹⁵ See Odoemene, “Fighting Corruption without the State”

¹¹⁶ Odoemene, “Fighting Corruption without the State”; Daniel Jordan Smith, “Ritual Killing, 419, and Fast Wealth: Inequality and the Popular Imagination in Southeastern Nigeria,” *American Ethnologist* 28, no. 4 (2001): 803–826. also Interview with business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹¹⁷ Interview with business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹¹⁸ Also see the Karin Barber *Generation of Plays*

is a particular genre of sensational form in Nigeria that acts as an interpretation of the apparently mysterious origins of wealth. The sudden appearance of fabulous lifestyles during the oil boom without any apparent basis in hard work stimulated these soul-searching explorations of the sources of wealth. The second generation of hotels can be understood as such an exploration. I also draw a parallel with Andrew Apter's *Spectacle of Culture*, in which he argues that "in what became the magical realism of Nigerian modernity, the signs of development were equated with its substance."¹¹⁹ In this way hotels and other specifically modern forms have the power to "conjure the real". Here money can be produced in volumes proportionately greater than work put in, with or without recourse to the occult.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Apter, *The Pan-African Nation*, 41

¹²⁰ Some of these issues were explored in an earlier era by Karin Barber

Latter part of Phase 2 (c.1992 - c.1996)

Hotels as input production cluster

In the last few years of this period (c.1992-1996), stealthy guerrilla-filmmaking strategies meant that whilst Nollywood was yet to impact “hotel scenes”, hotels were already contributing to the filmmaking process. In these years, hotels provided multiple scene types without the full knowledge of owners or guests. Chief Tony initially missed that films were being shot in the Zodiac Hotel because he would have expected “big lights and all what-not like in the movie industry”, whereas the actual shooting consisted of “somebody sitting there with a camcorder and someone else over there wearing a microphone, and they are talking like they are low key...”¹²¹ In this way, the earliest filmmakers were able to make use of hotels’ gardens, bedrooms, restaurants and bars.¹²² They even used hotel guests as unwitting “extras”: secretly filming crowded hotel events, such as weddings, to represent crowd scenes.¹²³ If hoteliers did catch on, they saw Nollywood as such a gimmick that they were known to secretly play along and give tip-offs for when the big events were taking place.¹²⁴ The incorporation of the extra-filmic world into early Nollywood pictures resulted in the genre having an almost documentary, “hyper-real” quality - described by Jedlowski as a combination of “melodrama and realism”.¹²⁵

In these early years, hotels were not yet used for lodging cast and crew. Filmmakers and actors were living on very humble means and were unable to pay for hotel rooms. Many of the actors were poor students at one of the town’s (then) four universities and polytechnics¹²⁶, and were “almost destitute, living hand-to-mouth... shooting in the harshest conditions.”¹²⁷ They also lived locally, and therefore already had accommodation in family houses or at the university accommodations and so did not have a great need for hotel rooms.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹²² Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹²³ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹²⁴ See Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹²⁵ Jedlowski, “Videos in Motion”, 138.

¹²⁶ University of Nigeria (Enugu Campus), Enugu State University, Institute of Management and Technology

¹²⁷ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹²⁸ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

Phase 3: c. 1996 - 2002

i. As Scene

The “Nollywood Hotel Scene” emerged in the mid-1990s, with film production becoming more overt than in the early “guerrilla” years. In this period, Nollywood was still a fairly peripheral part of the Hotel Scene. Hotels were important social hubs and actors were initially amongst the least notable persons in scenes inhabited by big men and other celebrated figures. Enugu’s leading hotels hosted politicians including Presidents Babiganda and Abacha (as well as many Nigerian state senators and governors) and sports stars including Muhammed Ali and former Bolton Wanderers’ footballer Jay-Jay Okocha.¹²⁹

Although a few of the actors, such as Pete Edochie and Chika “Zebrudaya” Okpala, were already local celebrities for their work on television and radio, the majority were unknown students and graduates, “looking for how to make ends meet, pay the fees...”¹³⁰ Film veteran Olu Jacobs described how in this era “people didn’t want to talk to us... we were looked at as charlatans and non-entities.”¹³¹ Indeed, it was more often a case of Nollywood people attempting to use their access to the hotel bars to persuade the big men to sponsor their movies.¹³² This dynamic was reflected in the disinterest by the early hotel owners in whether their names were listed on the film credits. Chief Tony even mentioned cases in which the filmmakers lobbied the hoteliers to even be allowed to list the hotel on the credits, such was the discrepancy in their relative statuses.¹³³

Nollywood’s main contribution to the hotel scene at this time was the “block-booking” of rooms. Under these arrangements, filmmakers would pay hoteliers up-front (80-100% of the total¹³⁴) for a number of rooms for a set period. Although they would usually have to give

¹²⁹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017; , Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹³⁰ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹³¹ Olu Jacobs words reported by Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017 .

¹³² Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo described how he would be approached by people at this time in the bar who hoped for them to sponsor his movie, and he would point them in the direction of politicians who “might be looking for where to put some their money... what [the filmmakers] were looking for was chicken feed to them”

¹³³ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹³⁴ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; Lagos location manager Mrs Remi Ajibua-Ajayi, 27 May 2017

considerable discounts (often around 50%¹³⁵) many hoteliers saw this as the primary benefit of their relationship with Nollywood.¹³⁶ Hotel owners reported block-booked room-numbers at between six and twenty five (i.e. for each individual hotel).¹³⁷ The smaller productions required around eight hotel rooms for crew and five for cast, with the larger ones requiring 15 rooms for crew and up to 10 for cast (usually split between one or two hotels).¹³⁸ These figures correspond to larger numbers of actual people as the majority of cast and crew would stay two or three to a room.¹³⁹ The duration of these stays was typically two weeks but could range from one week to one month.¹⁴⁰

This contribution was especially valuable at that time because the Enugu hotel market was experiencing a crash. During this period, Chief Tony carried out a tourism feasibility study for the city (as part of the planning for the FIFA World Youth Championships)¹⁴¹. He found that Enugu had just under a 1000-room capacity, compared to a daily city-wide guest-count of under 200.¹⁴² The situation was caused by a combination of steadily rising room supply and a collapse in demand. The hotel numbers in the city had continued to increase through the

¹³⁵ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017; hotel manager Mrs Julie Obiagele Okenwa 16 May 2017; film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017

¹³⁶ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; ; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; Interview with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017 filmmaker/hotel owner

¹³⁷ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; film producer/hotel owner Interview with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017

¹³⁸ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; film producer/hotel owner Interview with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017.

¹³⁹ Interviews with hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

¹⁴⁰ Interviews with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017;

¹⁴¹ These were eventually held in Enugu, Lagos, Ibadan and Port Harcourt.

¹⁴² The figure of 200 is based on chief Tony's early private survey from 1985 - he estimated that there was a drop-off, due to economic downturn and state proliferation, so the figure for the mid-1990s is likely to be slightly less than that.

1980s until around 1993¹⁴³, with the establishment of such hotels as the Golden Sand Beach Hotel Resort¹⁴⁴ and the Nike Lake Hotel, as well as many smaller establishments.¹⁴⁵

Whilst the number of hotels went up, the demand for their services declined significantly in the mid-1990s. This was partly caused by the newly created state capitals drawing guests away from Enugu. Owerri became a particularly important competitor, with a strong hotel culture emerging in the city in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁴⁶ The creation of three new state capitals in 1991, in Awka (Anambra State), Umuahia (Abia State) and Asaba (Delta State) further compounded the problem.¹⁴⁷ In addition, by the early 1990s Nigeria was experiencing an economic downturn, which was exacerbated by the political instability of the aborted 1993 election and subsequent period of military rule under General Abacha (1993-98).¹⁴⁸

We therefore observe a synchronicity of the hotel overcapacity and Nollywood's emergence. The hotels needed new customers to fill up empty rooms and Nollywood required this plentiful space for filming and lodging. This observation is supported by a consideration of the particular category of hotels that entered into arrangements with filmmakers. Most commonly it was the second-generation hotels such as The Old Hotel, the Nico hotel, the Macdavos Hotel (for shooting and filming) and the Dontell and Konik¹⁴⁹ (for lodging only) - as these lacked a well-established customer base or even a clear business model.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Interviews with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017; Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹⁴⁴ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

¹⁴⁵ Interviews with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi gives the example of the Concord Hotel; Akachi Odoemene, "Fighting Corruption without the State: Civil Society Agency and the "Otokoto Saga" *Journal of Historical Sociology* Vol. 25 No. 3 September 2012

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017; Interview with Professor Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi, 2 May 2017; Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017

¹⁴⁸ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹⁴⁹ Interviews with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

¹⁵⁰ Interviews with Business executive Buffy Okeke Ojudu, 20 April 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

ii. Nollywood Production Cluster

On the other side - in terms of an input into the filmmaking process - hotels were of crucial significance during this period - both for shooting and lodging. First we turn to their use as shooting locations, before looking at their use for lodging, before considering the extent to which these two inputs were co-ordinated together.

a) Shooting

Hoteliers soon caught on to the guerrilla film-making strategies as they discovered images of their own hotels, or (in Chief Tony's case) even themselves, in the pictures: "wait a minute, that's my restaurant!... and that's me sitting in the corner!"¹⁵¹ In addition, film crews became more substantial, making inconspicuous shooting difficult. Such guerrilla-film-making practices therefore subsided and were replaced by agreed shooting arrangements in which hotel locations were primarily used to depict bedroom scenes.

It must be acknowledged that these hotel rooms were generally considered less convincing than real bedrooms in houses. Location Manager Sylvan, for example, insisted that real bedrooms gave off a "very different feeling from that of the hotel" and that it was impossible for hotels to "give you the true picture of a house"¹⁵².

However, hotel-rooms had certain benefits, both in terms of process-efficiency and factor availability. Whilst house-owners would often impose awkward restrictions on film crews, especially regarding start and finish times, hotels provided a more flexible shooting environment. Similarly, whilst house owners would block access to some parts of their houses (especially bedrooms), hotels made up for the short-fall in bedroom-supply. Hotel-bedroom-shots were therefore often spliced together with house-downstairs shots.¹⁵³ Some up-market hoteliers even claimed that their rooms were so sumptuously decorated that could pass convincingly as residential interiors. Chief Tony, for example, claimed that his "executive suites" had been undetectably used to represent sitting rooms and bedrooms.

¹⁵¹ Interview with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017

¹⁵² Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁵³ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

b) Lodging

Whilst hotels still played a role in filming, they became even more crucial for lodging. As production continued to be clustered in Enugu, many cast and crew did still live locally to production. This would in theory give the option of locally resident film staff continuing to lodge in their own homes, as in the earliest years. Although this did sometimes occur, it was usually avoided for the crew and parts of the cast¹⁵⁴. Filmmaking schedules were so tight that the barracks-style system of lodging film staff in hotels promoted logistical efficiency and workplace discipline.¹⁵⁵ To ensure that everything ran on time, a film's producer sent a vehicle to the hotel(s) at an appointed time in the morning to take everyone to the film location.¹⁵⁶

If your call-time is 8am, everybody is in the hotel, 8am you drop the car, the car will take them to the location... but if they come from their house, they will come any time they feel like.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, the main actors received hotel accommodation as part of the filming package, regardless of where they had their own houses nearby.¹⁵⁸ Other actors who were not stars but playing important supporting roles - the "up-comers" - would usually be lodged in the same hotel as the crew, whilst those in smaller roles would be drawn from local talent and commute from home.¹⁵⁹

The efficiency of this system was somewhat mitigated by the need to employ at least two hotels for lodging one film's staff in order to comply with professional hierarchies. The films' stars, and sometimes directors, would require to be lodged in a separate and higher standard of hotel from the other cast and crew. Location manager Sylvan noted that only the top stars, "like Genevieve, Emeka Ike and RMD" would be lodged in the Golden Royale Hotel (one of the most expensive hotels in Enugu). Some of the senior crew, such as the director, could sometimes be lodged in the same hotel as everyone else, but in a higher category of room.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017; Lagos location manager Mrs Remi Ajibua-Ajayi, 27 May 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017

¹⁵⁶ Also see Hotel Owner Mr Boniface on logistical difficulties of picking each crew/cast member up from different places

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Enugu Location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁶⁰ Interview with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

Film Producer Princess gave the example of a highly tiered lodging arrangement for her production *Living Ghost*, in which film staff were spread across five different hotels. The biggest stars (Junior Pope, Walter Anger, Nkoli) were in a hotel of N8000, the next biggest star (Chiwete Lago) was in a hotel of N7000, followed by Ma Cynthia in a hotel of N5000; then the director in a hotel of N4000; followed by the rest of the crew in a hotel of N3500. Having to confront this hierarchy, the owners of the mid-range Media Royal and The Old Hotel, Michael Amadi and Mr Boniface, rued that their hotels were heavily booked for crew but that they could never get the stars.¹⁶¹

In terms of volume, hotel rooms would be needed for around 10-12 crew members. The minimum would include the director, the assistant director, the costumier, the location manager, the prop-and-set man, the make-up girl and the director-of-photography.¹⁶² The room requirement for actors would fluctuate more over the shoot: usually sitting at around 7-12 people¹⁶³ but sometimes rising to 15-20 over peak-shooting periods (especially for epics). Therefore, at the height of filming hotel accommodation might have been needed for a total of 30 people for a production.¹⁶⁴ Regarding accommodation length, crew and main actors would need to reside at the hotel for an average of two weeks¹⁶⁵, with supporting actors staying for the length of their parts. As a proportion of total production costs, lodging costs were significant - taking up to 35% of a film's budget.¹⁶⁶

c) Co-ordinating Shooting and Lodging with each other:

Considering that hotels were used both for shooting and lodging, it is instructive to explore how these two functions have been co-ordinated with each other. There was a choice to shoot films and lodge cast and crew at the same hotel, therefore co-locating the two inputs. This saved costs as many hotels would allow the filmmakers to shoot for free if they paid to lodge

¹⁶¹ Interviews with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017

¹⁶² Enugu Location Manager Mrs Toni Ikechi

¹⁶³ Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁶⁵ Interviews with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Location Manager Chiamaka; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017;

¹⁶⁶ See CDGN Chairman Princess - this high-side figure is for films where most of the cast required accommodation - it would be lower for those films with cast living locally.

in a room.¹⁶⁷ This filming permission occasionally included the whole hotel¹⁶⁸ but would usually only include the room that had been booked.¹⁶⁹

However, it was more common to shoot and lodge at different hotels. There were differences in the specifications of these two inputs that often precluded any fusion. These differences resulted both from the needs of the filmmakers and the supply that hotels were willing to provide. Regarding the needs of the film-makers, there were three main differences in specification. First, shooting generally required a more highly-specified hotel than lodging. Higher-end hotels were needed to produce a convincingly glamorous movie and location managers carefully vetted them to ensure they effectively conveyed the story and maintained continuity (e.g. matching colour schemes if splicing with house shots)¹⁷⁰. The most professional location managers were beginning to develop a structured process, which will be explored in more detail in the next phase.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, any cheap and reasonably well-located hotel would be sufficient for lodging the majority of cast and crew.¹⁷²

Second, there was a requirement for variation in shooting-locations, which was to the contrary of the lodging requirements. In the case of shooting hotels, there was a concern that particular hotels could be over-used as locations to the point that audiences were recognizing the spaces.¹⁷³ This would constitute a case of the “star houses” syndrome discussed in the previous scene.¹⁷⁴ Hotels that could be labelled “star hotels” during this period included the

¹⁶⁷ Interviews with hotel owner Chief Anthony Okeke Ojiudo, 12 May 2017, Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Afobi Africa; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017 Hotel Owner

¹⁶⁸ eg Afobi Afrika Hotel - this hotel reported that 90% of those who shot there also lodged there.

¹⁶⁹ eg Michael Amadi's Hotel, Mr Boniface Hotel, Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017. Any additional charges for shooting in larger rooms or other hotel facilities ranged from a tokenistic “add-on” (e.g. N500) to the same market rate that any non-lodging crew might pay (e.g. N3-5000).

¹⁷⁰ Location manager Chiamaka would carefully read the script and had a creative process for matching appropriate locations with the ideas of the script-writer; Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Interview with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

¹⁷¹ This is based on a description of Enugu Location Manager Chiamaka's process; Interview with Enugu Location managers Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017 and Asaba Location Manager Chinedu Arinze had similar processes.

¹⁷² Interview with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

¹⁷³ Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Awka location manager Piccolo Chidese Oye, 20 December 2015.

Macdavos and the Nico Hotels.¹⁷⁵ There was therefore a pressure to de-concentrate shooting in a wider range of hotels and to constantly churn shooting through new hotels. In the case of lodging-hotels, on the other hand, there were no such pressures - with location managers often preferring to concentrate lodging for many films in a few hotels.¹⁷⁶

Third, the need for hotel shooting was more limited in volume than that of lodging. Even if hotel rooms were being employed to shoot some interior scenes, many other locations would be employed, such as houses, streets and village settings¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, the crew needed to be accommodated at a hotel for the duration of a shoot (typically around two weeks, and up to two months for the largest productions¹⁷⁸) and the actors at least for parts of it. The Beyond Hotel owner Prince Anthony Okoli gave the example of small recent production, in which just one scene was actually shot at the hotel but several crew members stayed at the hotel for two weeks.¹⁷⁹

There was also differentiation in terms of the supply of hotels for shooting and lodging functions. In terms of lodging, hoteliers were open to accommodating film crews as long as they paid an agreed rate. Conversely, many hotel owners would either block or vet film shooting. In the case of the Zodiac, Chief Tony usually blocked shooting and would carefully vet the types of films he did allow. Generally he would permit wholesome genres like musicals but would refuse films with any “juju nonsense”. Nondon Hotel was reported to have a similar policy.¹⁸⁰

We can therefore see a mirroring of the specifications from both the hoteliers and filmmakers’ sides: they were more choosy about each-other for shooting than lodging (i.e. there was both a higher demand and lower supply for shooting- than lodging-hotels). For film-makers, shooting-hotels needed to be of a higher standard and more diffusely concentrated (i.e. spread across a wider number of hotels) and regularly changed than lodging-hotels. For the second-generation hoteliers, they would usually agree to lodge film crews, but were slightly

¹⁷⁵ Interviews with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Location manager Toni Ikechi

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Enugu Location managers Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

¹⁷⁸ Interviews with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; Enugu Location managers Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

¹⁷⁹ Beyond Hotel Owner Prince Anthony Okoli.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017

more cautious about providing shooting locations. This created a situation in which securing shooting-hotels was a particularly fraught process, whilst getting lodging-hotels was fairly straightforward. Enugu Location Manager Chiamaka described a torturous process whereby hotel managers would automatically refuse shooting requests and she would have to wage pestering campaigns - through mutual contacts - to stand a chance of being accepted.

Phase 4: 2002-2012

Scene

From around 2002, Nollywood was getting more entangled in the hotel scene. Unlike the houses, the (second-generation) hotels shared with Nollywood a tendency towards the *money-making aesthetic* so there was no crisis in the relationship. In particular, Nollywood's star culture proved to be complementary to the hotel's activities.

In the "big boys' clubs" of the hotel bars, Nollywood actors' status increased significantly. By the early 2000s, big men who were known in their own regions paled in comparison to actors who had achieved continent-wide acclaim. Whereas the actors had previously been the ones chasing connections in the hotel bars, the roles had now reversed: the actors were being courted by big men to join their financing networks (through such activities as courtesy visits - see later scene). Actor Olu Jacobs observed that the big men were now

begging to see [him], asking whether their daughter or son could be mentored to act, to do this and that. That all of a sudden, the very people that wouldn't talk to him, he's now somebody and they are talking to [him]...¹⁸¹

Apart from constituting useful connections, lodging actors was now seen as a valuable asset for attracting business to the hotels. The presence of actors at the bar attracted many ordinary customers who would want to meet, take photos alongside, or simply look at the stars.¹⁸² Stars attracted other guests to "follow" them to a hotel, a process described by Hotelier Mr Boniface as "gingering" them to come.¹⁸³ This was especially important for hotels trying to develop as event venues, as star-associations were effective at attracting wedding events. The Castle Hotel for example, became a popular wedding venue after Genevieve Nnaji and Chibuzor "Phyno" Azubuike stayed there.¹⁸⁴ Location Manager Chiamaka described a newly-married bride boasting, "Ah don't you know that hotel that Phyno Fine and Genevieve stayed, that was where

¹⁸¹ Actor Olu Jacobs

¹⁸² Hotelier Michael Adigwe (La Vida Suites); Hotelier Michael Amadi (Media Royal Hotel)

¹⁸³ Interviews with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017 ; hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

we did our wedding!” Even hotels like La Vida Suites that would never consider allowing Nollywood shooting were very keen to host actors for this reason.¹⁸⁵

In this period, hotels became slightly more cautious about permitting shooting. Several that had previously allowed it, such as the English Hotel, the Clubhouse and La Virgin Hotels ceased to give permission.¹⁸⁶ Michael Adigwe, the owner of La Vida Suites, considered Nollywood production incompatible with his “sensitive type of clientele”, whilst producer Michael Amadi complained that one hotel where he was paying N600,000 for lodging would not even allow a single shot of a guest driving out of the hotel.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Interview with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017

¹⁸⁶ In the case of the English Hotel, the ban was unofficial - see Princess.

¹⁸⁷ Interviews with hotel owner/architect Michael Adigwe, 21 April 2017 ; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

Nollywood Production Input

As a production input, hotels continued to provide rooms for lodging Nollywood staff - often at increasingly high discounts as they came to appreciate Nollywood's other benefits. As the hotels accepted that they did not need to profit directly from the lodging arrangements¹⁸⁸, they were often willing to give Nollywood customers 50-60% discounts on room prices.¹⁸⁹ Mr Boniface, the manager of The Old Hotel, offered rooms to Nollywood for as little as N3000, representing a 70% discount.¹⁹⁰ In this period, "mega-productions" emerged (some of which were destined for cinema release) that required longer hotel-stays: often up to one month (*Idemili and the Calabash*)¹⁹¹ and even two months (Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart*).

However, the hotels were increasingly inadequate as shooting spaces. As we have seen, the availability of hotels for shooting decreased slightly. More crucially, film productions were getting bigger and far more exacting in their specifications, which were reflected in the growing professionalization of location management. Location managers' working practice came to incorporate structured processes for location selection. As they became more discerning, shooting in ordinary unmodified hotel rooms became less desirable.

Enugu, in particular, became known for the professionalism of its location managers. Unlike in Lagos and Asaba, Enugu's location managers were fully guilded: it was compulsory for anyone practising as one to be a member of the city's Creative Designer's Guild (CDGN).¹⁹² Participation was carefully regulated, with productions halted by guild enforcers if non-guilded location managers are caught.¹⁹³ This guild system has ensured that from around 2000,

¹⁸⁸ Michael Adigwe, a veteran in the hotel industry who had designed 21 hotels in the region since 1989 estimated that no hotel was making a 50% profit margin on their standard rooms so that they couldn't have been directly profiting from these arrangements.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with Enugu Location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Beyond Hotel Owner Prince Anthony Okoli gives up to 70%; Hotelier Michael Adigwe estimates 50%, owner of La Vida Suites; Michael Okoli, owner of Media Royal Hotel offers 60% off original price; Location manager Remi reported 30%

¹⁹⁰ Interview with hotel manager Boniface Uchechukwu, 17 May 2017.

¹⁹¹ Interviews with Enugu location manager Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu, 25 April 2017; Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017; hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

¹⁹² In Asaba, the guild does not include location managers, whilst the entire guild is fairly inactive in Lagos. For Lagos, see discussions with Location Manager Remi; for Asaba, see Creative Designer Guild Chairman Princess.

¹⁹³ Chairman of the Creative Designers' Guild Princess strictly enforced this system. In one case, an unregistered location manager tried to film a production at Beyond Hotels in Enugu. She arrived with guild enforcers, who halted the production with the threat of a fine of N5000 plus a

location managers served lengthy apprenticeships under the mentorship of older members. Enugu Location manager Mrs Chiamaka Okorie was apprenticed to Mrs Uju Mbamalu for two years (2005-2007), location manager Mrs Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu was apprenticed to Mrs Nkem Ikechi for four years (2000-2004) and location manager Mrs Toni Ikechi was apprenticed to Madam Sochias (2002-2006).

This training has helped Enugu location managers develop formalized procedures for choosing locations. First, they meet the script writer, director and art director to get a feel for the visual theme that they want for the movie. Next they carefully read the script - “breaking it down” and building a picture of each of the characters and the type of settings that would convey their personalities and the mood of each scene. They then go back to the director to discuss some provisional ideas.

As the scale of productions increased, these systems for choosing locations became ever more exacting. In the case of the Onye Eze Production *Idemili*, following two months of false starts in shooting, the director fired the location manager because she “couldn’t get exactly what the director, the writer, had in mind”. At this point he begged Chiamaka to take over the job. Chiamaka advised that it would be impossible to find the right locations in Enugu, and created a location schedule that took them to other states. The director was overjoyed, saying “Yes! Now you’re coming!... What are we waiting for? Can we start rolling tape? Because this is what I’ve been searching for!”¹⁹⁴

registration fee of N15,000 (rather than the normal N10,000, resulting an effective 100% penalty of N10,000). In the event, the producer agreed not to use the unregistered location manager.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Enugu location manager Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie, 19 May 2017

Phase 5: Innovations (2012-)

The period since 2012 has seen considerable innovation in the Nollywood “Hotel Scene-Production Cluster.” At the conclusion of the previous phase, we saw that a strong sympathetic relationship had developed between the lodging-hotels’ scene and the film production cluster. In this final scene, we explore how these hotels already specialized in lodging have deepened their relationship with Nollywood even further, resulting in the creation of “star spaces”. On the other hand, we also saw in the last phase that the shooting hotel scene and the production cluster were failing to articulate together to the same extent. In response to this hotel-shooting problem, several new forms have emerged, including in-hotel set-construction and new hybrid hotel spaces that closely integrate hospitality and film production.

Lodging hotels

As we saw in the previous phase, both Nollywood and the second-generation hotels employed a *money-making aesthetic* (in the Nollywood Hotel Scene) and the hotels were able to provide Nollywood with a much-needed input (in the Nollywood production cluster), enabling a strong collaboration in Nollywood lodging. This relationship has become even deeper and more intertwined, with some lodging hotels melding into the Nollywood industry entirely.

Several hotels, such as the Media Royal and the Toscana, now entirely focus their businesses on lodging Nollywood guests. As highly composed scenes in the *money-making aesthetic*, they include spaces in which actors are off-duty (i.e. lodging but not shooting), transforming them into successful ‘star spaces’. Top stars patronize the bars and sit at the pools and hold celebrations, drawing other important clients to the facilities. As hoteliers are embedded within these ‘star spaces’, some have begun to feel like film directors - as “part and parcel”¹⁹⁵ of the movie industry - and have decided to enter into film production themselves.

For example, the owner of the Media Royal, Michael Amadi, founded the hotel for general-purpose hospitality in 2009.¹⁹⁶ For the first two years of operation, he received very little custom from Nollywood. However, in 2011 the twin-sister-actress-producers Chidiebere and Chidinma Aneke lodged at the hotel with their cast and crew. This attracted several more productions over the proceeding months, at which point Amadi decided to target the sector, offering filmmakers up to 60% discount. In the following years, a huge number of productions

¹⁹⁵ Interview with hotel Manager Prince Anthony Okoli, 8 May 2017

¹⁹⁶ Interview with hotel owner/film producer Michael Amadi, 16 May 2017

lodged at the Media Royal and it became known as a “Nollywood hotel”. The hotel can lodge up to four crews at a time in its 26 rooms and there have been three-month-solid periods in which every room has been booked by Nollywood people. Typically each production’s staff stays at the hotel for around two weeks, with the longest stretching to 60 days (for the Onye Eze-produced film *Idemili*).

As Amadi’s Media Hotel became a known lodging centre for Nollywood, its restaurant, pool and bar transformed into a key social hub for Nollywood actors. Many of the top Igbo stars were known to stay there, including Nkem Owoh (a.k.a Usuofia), Mercy Johnson, Kenneth Okonkwo, Indi Edo, Mike Ezuruonye and Jim Iyke. Amadi was particularly proud that the stars gave the seal of approval to his outdoor barbeque, gleefully stating that “Ramsey Noah likes our fish!” The directors would also hold wrap parties there at the end of shooting, and the stars would celebrate their birthdays by the pool. As a result, many fans would patronize his bar, “even if they don’t have a word with [the actors], they will be looking at them, discussing them”, and some would ask to take photos with the stars.

By 2013, Amadi was finding that he himself was becoming attracted to film production and he also received encouragement and advice from the movie people who lodged in his hotel. In addition, he realized that he already owned the most expensive input necessary for making movies. He therefore became an hotelier-filmmaker, launching Royal Pictures in the same year and using the hotel to lodge almost every one of his productions, totalling around 15-20 movies by May 2017. His own productions required an average of 6-11 lodging rooms, which would otherwise cost around N6000 per day (for one to two weeks), therefore saving a total of nearly one million naira. He also saves costs by utilizing all of the hotel’s facilities, including the kitchen - so he doesn’t have to pay for any outsourced catering. Prince Anthony Okoli, the manager of The Beyond Hotel, was planning a similar excursion into film production, and already saw himself an entertainment-industry veteran - having released two albums.

These hotels have now established formal associations with the Nollywood stars, whose names and faces adorn the hotels’ marquees. The association is exaggerated through a haze of ambiguity, with some signages implying that the hotels are run by movie characters. These associations go far beyond simple product endorsements - rather they constitute an emergent Nollywood cultural branding. Characters such as Mr Ibu and Osuofia channel the industry’s heritage as they are anchored in the same neighbourhoods as their sponsored hotels and often hang out in them. These relationships have helped the hotels to develop their other functions. The Toscana, for example, uses the Mr Ibu imagery to market its range of event services, including beauty pageants, musical concerts and comedy performances.



Fig. 6. Signage of the Toscana Hotel, featuring the Nollywood star Mr Ibu.



Fig. 7: Signage of D-King's Planet Suites featuring the star actor Osuofia

Innovations in shooting-hotels

One solution to the challenge of hotel-shooting has been to employ sophisticated set-construction techniques to transform the hotels' interiors into settings that match films' precise production specifications. In this sense, hotels almost become like studios: with fabricated sets and controlled shooting environments. Members of a new generation of production designers have started to come to Enugu to fabricate sets in local hotels. For example, during production of Genevieve Nnaji's *Lionheart* in spring 2017, the renowned artist-set man Pat Nebo built an elaborate set in the large lobby area of the Ascot Hotel.¹⁹⁷ The set was constructed of plywood and included several separate spaces representing modern domestic interiors. Locally based set men have also developed their own techniques, with the set men Gabriel "Gabazzini" Okorie, Jude Okoh and Sele O Sele becoming particularly

¹⁹⁷ Interview with art director Pat Nebo, 19 February 2016

proficient.¹⁹⁸ Even hotels with relatively small spaces have proved to be malleable: the Beyond Hotel was transformed into a palace using purple fabrics, whilst a room in the The Old Hotel was emptied of its furnishings and turned into an “Ogboni” coven using fabrics, plastic “flex”, and coloured paper.¹⁹⁹

An alternative response to the hotel-shooting problem has been to create entirely new types of spaces - again melding together aspects of film studios and hotels (but in a different way to set construction). Several filmmakers have built their own specially designed hotels in order to remove the costs of shooting and lodging. As of June 2017, there were at least three such hotels in Enugu: The Dematel (owned by OJ Production), D-King’s Planet Suites (owned by Onye Eze Productions) and the Lunik Hotel (owned by Magic Movies).²⁰⁰ These hotels were used for shooting and lodging the producer’s own cast and crew; for renting out to other filmmakers; as well as taking ordinary hotels guests. Since its creation in 2013, D-King’s Planet Suites alone had housed 30-40 of Onye Eze’s own productions, as well as over thirty productions from other film companies.²⁰¹ There was considerable innovation in the interior design and colour combinations of these hotels as they were tailored for shooting and had a strong film aesthetic. In D-King’s Planet Suites, each corridor had its own colour scheme - on the walls of the hallways and inside the rooms and on the furnishings. This enabled the possibility to shoot an entire fictional house (with distinctively identifiable rooms) in the hotel. The colours used for the curtains and bedspreads were also bright and well-co-ordinated in a fashionable Nollywood style.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with art director Pat Nebo, 19 February 2016

¹⁹⁹ The term Ogboni traditionally refers to a Yoruba fraternal society; in this context it is being used to refer to a representation of a generic secret society that has constructed a sacrificial shrine.

²⁰⁰ These hotels were a sub-set of a much larger number of hotels owned by film marketers (see “Nollywood Hotel Scene”). These three, however, were the only ones specifically designed for filmmaking.

²⁰¹ Interview with Film producer/hotel owner Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi, 17 May 2017



Fig. 8. D-King's Planet Suites exterior

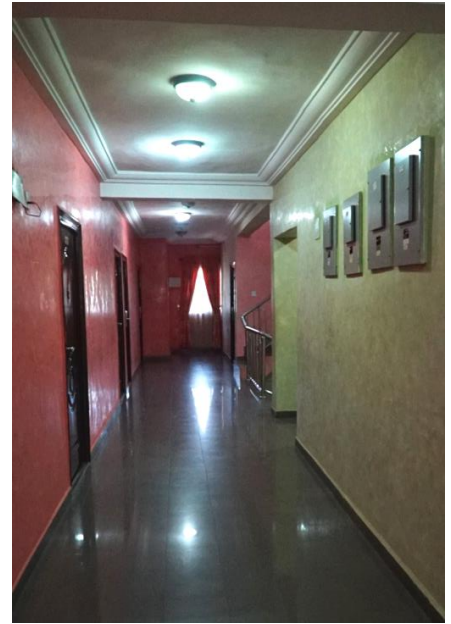


Fig 9. D-King's split-colour corridors



Fig. 10. & 11. Colour-co-ordinated room interior in D-King's Planet Suites



In a similar vein to the purpose-built hotels, Nollywood filmmakers have also moved into hospitality spaces that cater for shooting needs in genres other than “glamour”: including the “epic”, village and campus movies. They have done this through allying with Africa-fantasy-themed hospitality venues and resorts, resulting in the spaces’ transformation into melded film-studio-event-centre-lodging-venues.

Africa-themed resorts have existed in Nigeria for at least three decades.²⁰² Described by Ola Uduku as “African Safari” spaces, their characteristic features include thatched gazebos and cane chairs.²⁰³ The Nike Lake Resort was the first such venue, appearing in Enugu in the mid-1980s. However, it has only been in the last five years that a resonance with Nollywood has begun. A leading example is the Ofu-Obi African Centre, which has “traditional” style bungalows, thatched meeting spaces, curtains in ethnic materials and archaic technologies such as kerosene “bush lanterns”.

When Ofu-Obi was originally created in 2003 by the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJP), it was targeted at Christian guests looking for a place for conferences, celebrations and spiritual retreats. This situation persisted until 2013 when the film producer

²⁰² Personal communication Ola Uduku, University of Manchester

²⁰³ Ola Uduku blogging
<https://transnationalarchitecturegroup.wordpress.com/2017/02/22/lou-moon-viewing-tropical-materials-renewable-technologies-and-local-community-engagement-at-a-coastal-resort-ghana/>
 accessed September 2018; interviews with Art Director Arokari Opeyemi Daniel, 09 June 2015; art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

Chidi Okeh persuaded the centre to welcome Nollywood productions²⁰⁴, resulting in dramatic changes to the resort's operations.

The Ofu-Obi African Centre's style corresponds closely with that of the new "epic" film genre, which Meyer describes as an "aestheticized tradition". In this style, materials and designs associated with "Africaness" are used in attractive and sanitised new ways to "evoke a sense" of tradition without directly referencing any particular tribal customs. Ofu-Obi Africa's curtains, for example, are made from a fabric usually used for Agbada, a Yoruba garment. Similarly, the meeting houses employ a type of thatching that is not local or culturally-identifiable and the interior walls comprise raw unfinished brickwork that conveys an African Arts-and-Craftness but without an original local construction technique. In line with the "aestheticized tradition" style, the appearance of the resort is incredibly clean and manicured. There are hints of colonial stylings with bits of white-washing and a tendency towards verandas. The manager, Mrs Julie Obiagiele Okenwa, emphasised that the obsessive neatness is an integral part of the centre's ethos. Considerable co-ordination is required to maintain this appearance, including constant fumigations, prim housekeeping, perfectly cut lawns and hedges manicured by a specialist hedge-cutter brought down from Nsukka.

Since 2013, the centre's style and sprawling estate have provided a versatile filming environment and it has begun to take on the feel of a film studio, with simultaneous productions going on around the grounds. The "traditional" style makes it suitable for the "epic" and "royal" genres of movies, as well as the village scenes of "glamour" movies.²⁰⁵ In addition, its green, spacious environment and central library building are the perfect setting for the popular university "campus" movies. The commodious environment and separate bungalows are convenient for filming as it allows production to take place without the filmmakers and other guests disturbing each other. The centre also provides copious accommodation so that 90% of those who film there also lodge on-site.²⁰⁶

Nollywood does not simply use Ofu-Obi Africa's facilities, it has also remoulded it and contributed to the growth of new functions there. Whilst the centre previously had a

²⁰⁴ The first film producer to use Ofu-Obi Africa was Chidi Oke, who produced movies for Onye Eze Productions.

²⁰⁵ "Epic" movies refers to a genre of film set in an imagined pre-colonial past in a fantastical style, which flourished from the late 1990s. The "Royal" genre was established around 2007, and is characterized by royal storylines in contemporary settings. "Glamour" refers to movies set in the contemporary world with a focus on ostentatious lifestyles. This genre has been popular since the early years of Nollywood. See Haynes: *Nollywood*.

²⁰⁶ Interview with hotel manager Mrs Julie Obiagiele Okenwa 16 May 2017;

consistent “traditional” theme, Nollywood has pushed for this to be glamorized in the bungalow-interiors so that they are more suitable for shooting contemporary bedroom scenes. The centre’s manager has acquiesced, replacing the Yoruba Agbada curtains with standard contemporary ones manufactured in China or South Korea²⁰⁷. They are currently engaged in similar negotiations about changing the period iron-framed beds to fashionable new upholstered ones.

In addition, film production has stimulated the growth of new functions at Ofu-Obi Africa inspired by the glamour of “aesthetized tradition”. Following the arrival of Nollywood, the centre became a popular venue for themed photo-shoots. These are now an important part of its business²⁰⁸ and include “pre-wedding” shoots for wedding invitations, as well as for birthdays and publicity shots. The style of these photo-shoots mimic that of the films made at the centre including models made up in epic, royal and contemporary glamour styles.



Fig. 12 A birthday photo shoot at Ofu-Obi African Centre

²⁰⁷ My research with Nigerian curtain distributors suggested that 99% of contemporary curtain material were sourced from these two countries. See interview with curtain distributor December 2015.

²⁰⁸ Interview with hotel manager Mrs Julie Obiagiele Okenwa, 16 May 2017

Postscript

Chapter Four has explored the articulation of the experience economy (the Nollywood house and hotel scenes) with a creative industry cluster (Nollywood film production). In this postscript, I explore how an iteration of the Nollywood House Scene articulates with the wider “non-creative” industrial clusters, especially in relation to financing functions.

House Scene

Semi-formalized honorific “courtesy visits” in the houses of big men are an important element of the Igbo “House Scene”.²⁰⁹ These courtesy visits are carefully composed, pageant-like social calls that honour a big man at home. I first paint a brief sketch of the format of a courtesy call, using the case of my own courtesy visit to the house of Prince Engineer Arthur Eze on 6 May 2017 as an illustration.

The courtesy visitor first sends a formal written letter of introduction (which includes a notice of the visit, and information about the courtesy visitor and proposed project) a week or two before the intended visit. In my case, the big man was Prince Engineer Arthur Eze - an oil baron reputed to be the richest man in Igboland. The courtesy visitor then makes arrangements with the gatemen and other household staff who control access to the owner. This involved a N10,000 “dash” to the gateman in my case. In a corresponding way, big men carefully compose their houses for these interactions, structuring dedicated quarters around the practice. On arrival at the house, the visitor therefore waits in a series of impressive ante-chambers; I passed through three such rooms. When he finally reaches the big man, the visitor will formally introduce himself and may present him with an award or honorific gift, at which time there is sometimes a photo-opportunity. The big man will then present the courtesy visitor with a tokenistic envelope of cash.²¹⁰ At this point the courtesy visitor would usually present a business project for which he - or the people he is representing - are hoping to raise sponsorship. I was representing Princess (the Chairman of the Creative Designers Guild of Nigeria), who was hoping to raise N40 million for a film about Arthur Eze. The courtesy visit will

²⁰⁹ Two other types of social visit can be identified. One is the social visits made between big men. Daniel Jordan-Smith likens these types of social occasions to “country clubs, golf clubs, debutante balls”. He emphasizes their importance in particular for maintaining connections which involved mutual favours or payments in kind. A third type of social visit is identified by Michael Rowlands, in which the big man visits the house of the smaller man.

²¹⁰ In the case of my courtesy visit, we were not presented with this, which infuriated my co-visitor, who took it to be a mark of “maximum disrespect”

usually end with the big man inviting the visitor to join him around the dining table for a meal, which consisted of breadfruit in my case.

The courtesy visit aspect of the “house scene” employs an *aesthetics of authentication*. The audience with the big man and the presentation of the honorific gift implies the acknowledgement of communal obligation.²¹¹ associated with authentic wealth. Similarly, the giving of the envelope recalls the popular proverb, “If you go to see the king, you must not go home empty handed”.²¹² Big men carefully compose their houses for these interactions, structuring dedicated quarters around this practice. In my field notes, I described the overpowering awesomeness of such a wing,

The chairs were all throne-like, elaborate gold structures with dark-red cushions. There were two huge chandeliers, which were too big for the space, especially with the low ceilings. The walls were completely covered with the photos of [Arthur Eze] and his family, and photos of him with world leaders. One was a delegation to Israel with Shimon Peres. There were also two huge paintings of him.²¹³

In recent years, developments in the Nollywood industry have enabled courtesy-visit composition to grow into a sophisticated art form. Instead of visitors simply representing themselves, the visits now incorporate proxies and other third-parties, entourages and human adornments. In particular, star actors, actresses and beauty queens are considered the choice “packaging” for the visits.²¹⁴ In an enlightening conversation, beauty Queen Tyra Adaeze explained to me that I myself had played exactly the same role in the case of the Arthur Eze courtesy visit. It was in this context that Olu Jacobs, a veteran Nollywood actor, reflected on how actors who had previously been ignored in the “big boys’ club” of the hotel bars, were now being courted by the same clientele. The actors themselves are still relatively poor, but they have become an invaluable part of courtesy visits - either accompanying the courtesy visitor or representing him. These arrangements result in a more appealingly composed scene: in the photo-opportunity the big man will now receive his award from a famous actor or a titled beauty queen rather than from an unknown person.

²¹¹ See Michael Rowlands, “The Material Culture of Success: Ideals and Life Cycles in Cameroon,” in *Consumption and Identity*, ed. Jonathan Friedman (London: Routledge, 1994), 106–19.

²¹² Interview with Events Manager Godwin Praise “Peggy” Ekene, 21 May 2017

²¹³ Field Notes

²¹⁴ Interview with Miss Nollywood Adaeze Okoro, 22 June 2017

I carried out a case study of Nollywood's role in courtesy visits with Miss Nollywood, Princess Tyra Adaeze, who held the 2016 title of the Miss Nollywood beauty pageant. The Pageant was created in 2015 by Solomon "Bara" Odede in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State. Odede launched the pageant to great fanfare, promising to award prestigious prizes, including crowns as well as a new car, at the same time as raising awareness of film piracy. The pageant is held annually and awards crowns to winners in five categories.

By far the most famous Miss Nollywood is Queen Princess Tyra Adaeze.²¹⁵ Queen Adaeze has been very successful as a courtesy visitor. Her manager Robynz Gawa has co-ordinated the visits - sending the letters of introduction out to a number of politicians who welcomed Miss Nollywood into their houses. Miss Nollywood has presented awards to the Eze Aro (King) of Arochukwu, Mazi Vincent Ogbonnaya Okoro, in his palace, with the 19 chiefs that make up his kingdom also present; as well as to the Chairman of Kolokuma ('Kolga') Local Government Area, The Honourable Wisdom Fafi, in Bayelsa. They have sponsored Robynz Gawa and Miss Nollywood to engage in a number of projects under the umbrella of their new organization, The Hope Support Initiative Foundation.



Fig 13. Miss Nollywood presenting honorific gift to politician 1.

²¹⁵ Princess Tyra Adaeze's fame results primarily from a scandal that took place at the Miss Nollywood organization.

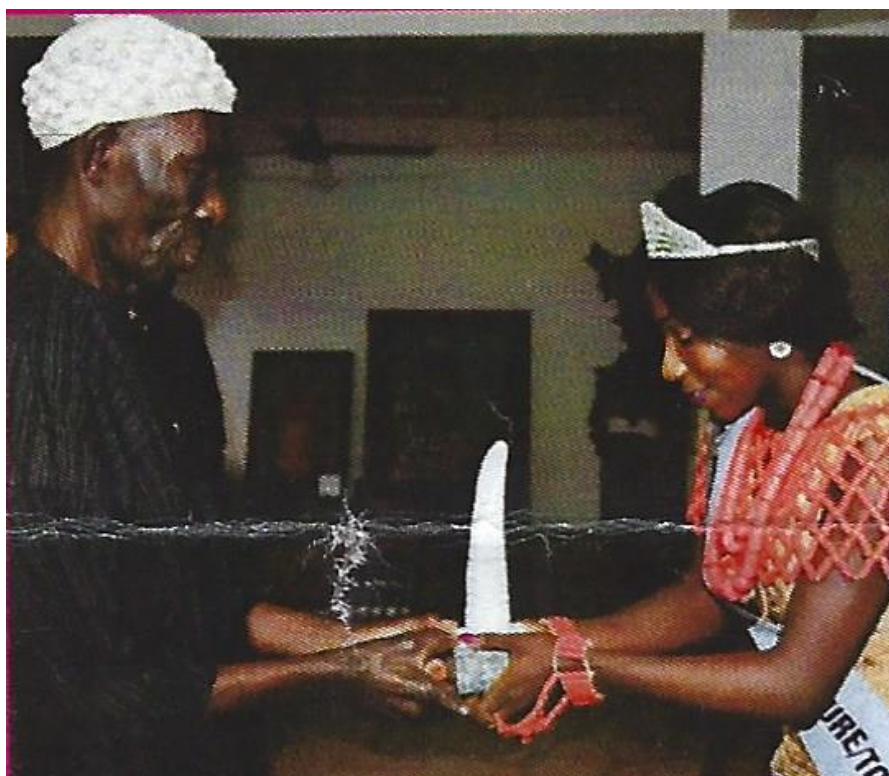


Fig 14. Miss Nollywood presenting honorific gift to politician 2.

Input into clusters

Whilst “courtesy visits” are an aspect of the house scene, they also form an important part of industrial clusters. Specifically, the “courtesy visit” can be understood as a form of investor-marketing. They are used by people to raise money for businesses in a wide variety of sectors: for example I came across visits proposing table-tennis tournaments, consumer-goods importation, awards ceremonies, cosmetics trading, dance events and film sponsorship. Although the presentation of the business proposal may be relatively trivial for the house owner,²¹⁶ it is the key purpose of the visit for the courtesy caller.²¹⁷

The new artfulness of the courtesy visit has contributed to its effectiveness as an investor-marketing strategy. The argument here is that “courtesy visits” are not simple formalities: in my case studies, “patrimonial” relationships were merely strong enough to ensure that a courtesy visit happens at all (and may also require a dash to “gatekeepers”). However, they do not explain whether the proposal is actually accepted. In order to understand this, it is necessary to consider the courtesy call’s composition.

²¹⁶ See Daniel Jordan Smith, “Ritual Killing 419 and Fast Wealth”.

²¹⁷ This is especially important opportunity because formal investment sources such as bank lending are still constrained by a lack of a credit rating system for individuals.

The courtesy visit has become something akin to a professional, staged-managed business plan-presentation. Actors, in particular, use their public-speaking skills and stage presence to present the proposal in a more persuasive way.²¹⁸ Apart from their theatrical skills, the actors increase the “realness” of the proposed project. This is a similar phenomenon to the fantasy-film worlds being used to prove that Amen estate was real. In the courtesy-call case, the presence of an actor who had been seen in a fictional movie also increases the reality of the business proposal,

[the courtesy-caller’s] idea is to make [the big man] think the idea is as real as bringing this person with them... the presence of the actor means that what you say is real.... because [the big men] see the actor on television so they 99% will take what he says to be true, over the normal person on the street.²¹⁹

This latter dynamic suggests that the actors not only market projects to investors in a theatrically appealing way, but that they also help to establish a sense of assurance and credit-worthiness. Producer CJ stated that actors had been so effective in this regard that some businessmen no longer wanted to use them as they were known to take over the business project completely - dispensing with the people they were meant to be representing. Film people are also able to draw on their expertise in creating printed promotional material (especially posters and video-jackets) to produce glossily printed investor-information pamphlets, which are presented during the courtesy visits.

²¹⁸ In other cases, the actors’ rhetorical skills are so strong that they persuade the big man to sideline the primary courtesy-caller, fully appropriating the proposed project

²¹⁹ Interview with Director/actor Chijoke Jonas, 19 May 2017.

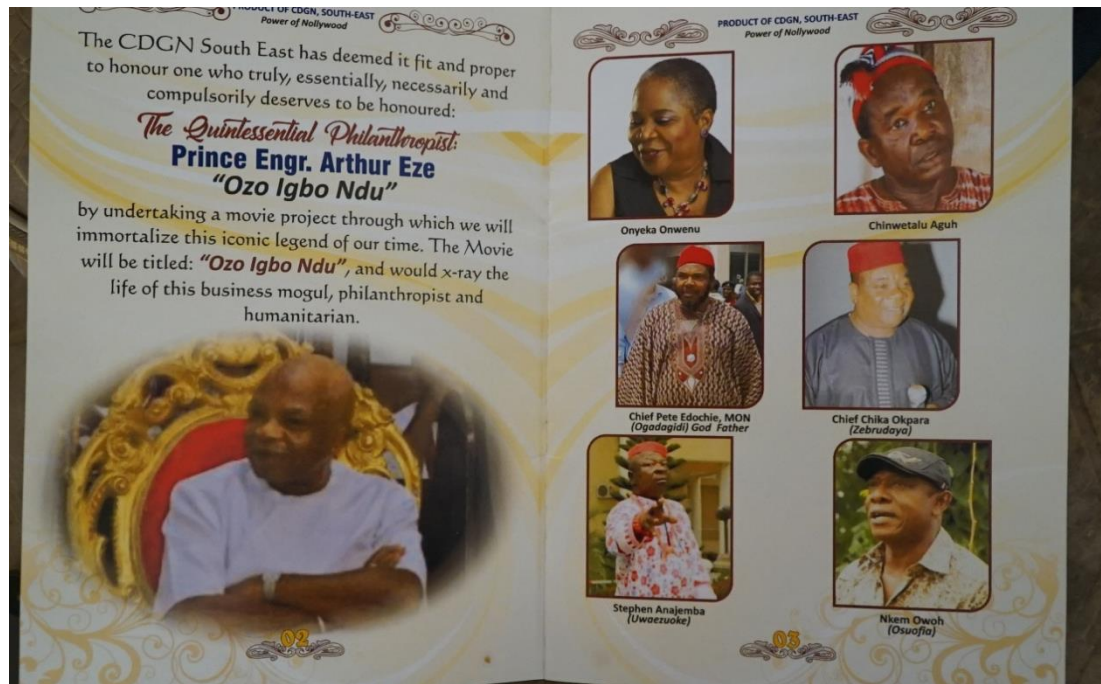


Fig 15. Promotional Material Created by Nollywood Practitioners to attract investment from Prince Engineer Arthur Eze

Final Thoughts: Nollywood and cultural branding

Returning to the case of the Miss Nollywood Pageant, I propose that this represents an important case of incipient Nollywood cultural branding²²⁰. In this regard, it is crucial to observe that the pageant's links with actual film production were tenuous. Its organizer Solomon Odede had produced a couple of very low budget local movies in Yenagoa but he was relatively unknown in the industry. The pageant had also not received any official sanction from Nollywood bodies like the Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN), Association of Movie Practitioners (AMP), or the Film and Video Producers and Marketers Association of Nigeria (FVPMAN).²²¹ The claims that it would promote awareness of piracy or provide an entry route into the industry were both implausible and incidental for both the contestants and big men

²²⁰ See, by comparison Olivier Crevoisier and Leila Kebir, "Cultural Resources and Regional Development: The Case of the Cultural Legacy of Watchmaking," in *Creative Cities, Cultural Clusters and Local Economic Development*, ed. Philip N. Cooke and Luciana Lazzeretti (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008), 26–48.

²²¹ This caused considerable controversy and members of the Actors Guild did consider storming the 2016 edition.

who received the queens during the courtesy calls.²²² As Miss Nollywood commented, “We didn’t really check [the Nollywood association]. We just cared about the name”.

The inclusion of the word “Nollywood” in the title was, however, of crucial significance. Princess Adaeze described the name as “awesome” and emphasized how it implied something of a huge scale,

[AB]: “Miss Nollywood”, it sounds big.

[Miss Nollywood]: “Yeah, seriously! Yes. Miss Nollywood sounds very big. Because, who doesn’t know Nollywood? So compare it to Miss Port Harcourt - it’s nothing compared to Miss Nollywood! It’s just like you coming down Miss Nigeria, Nollywood is a brand that is not just upcoming, it’s well-known all over the world!”

Queen Adaeze’s manager, Robynz Gawa, agreed with this point - that the actual relationship with the movie industry was of little importance, “it’s just the name [says very slowly with great emphasis] NOLLYWOOD! If you attach “Nollywood” to anything, people will be attracted to it.” In this sense, he compared people’s attitude to the Nollywood imagery as that towards a miracle-making pastor,

It’s just like a church, people don’t even need to investigate to find out where your power is coming from, all they want is the miracle! They want to get their healin’! So people don’t want to know if actually its genuine from the film industry. As far as the name Nollywood is there, they’re attracted.²²³

Apart from the lack of real connection with filmmaking, Princess Adaeze received no assistance from the Miss Nollywood organization, which would normally have been expected to provide ongoing promotion and support.²²⁴ Despite this, she had been able to use the “Miss Nollywood” name to make her reign a great success - holding a number of high-profile events - purely by combining her own ingenuity with the awe inspired by the title, “Miss Nollywood”.

²²² In addition, there were no known Nollywood actors, actresses or directors present at any of the annual pageants before 2018.

²²³ Interview with talent manager Robynz Gawa, 23 June 2017.

²²⁴ such as co-ordinating the courtesy visits. There was in fact a total breakdown of the relationship between Princess Adaeze and the Pageant, with the owner attempting to dethrone her.

In my article, *The End of Nollywood's Guilded Age*, I argued that this sensation of massiveness (or even miraculousness) has become a key characteristic of Nollywood over the past decade, partly as a result of state initiatives.²²⁵ In May 2009, the publication of the UNESCO report 'Analysis of the UIS International Survey on Feature Film Statistics' (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2009, 3) prompted a wave of international interest in the Nigerian film industry. The sudden increase in interest changed the discourse. It was now an internationally recognized success story, which contributed to an upturn of investor interest and the growth of lucrative international markets and industry narratives.

Back in Nigeria, this imagery was relentlessly played on by private and, especially, state actors. The National Film and Video Censors Board (NFVCB), in particular, used it to create what I have called the "Development Narrative" in which it used the industry's international recognition and unstoppable growth to authorize itself to swing into action and take control of the sector. The NFVCB was also alert to the potential of Nollywood in Nigerian national branding, initiating the Nigeria in the Movies (NIM) project. It argued that Nollywood was an industry of "strategic national importance" and that it provides a "global marketing window" for Nigeria. This involved an 'International Road Show' that saw representatives from the Board and approved industry leaders making publicity trips to London (2010), Nairobi (2011) and Edinburgh (2012) in order to enhance these benefits even further.

In the "scenes" literature, such culture branding (including the regional appellations and indications such as *Appellations d'Origine Contrôlées*) has usually been observed in relation to places studied by Regional Studies scholars, such as the Swiss Jura Arc "Watch Valley"²²⁶. It is extremely uncommon to find a similar case in a developing country context. The Miss Nollywood Beauty Pageant represents the almost total detachment of "Nollywood" from the movie industry and its emergence as a cultural brand. As such, it is perhaps the first case of successful geographical branding emerging from Nigeria.

²²⁵ Alexander Bud, "The End of Nollywood's Guilded Age? Marketers, the State and the Struggle for Distribution," *Critical African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2014): 91–121.

²²⁶ See Kebir and Crevoisier, "Cultural Resources and Regional Development".

Conclusion: Chapter 4

This account has used the framework of the scene-cluster relationship to explore the at-times fractious relationship between the house and hotel scenes on the one hand and the Nollywood production cluster on the other. In the case of houses, there were three phases. The first saw the emergence of the “Nollywood House” with a complementary relationship between the scene and cluster. The houses provided a useful shooting location for Nollywood and the filmmakers’ presence enhanced the money-authentication aesthetic of the house scene. It did this by increasing the sense of overpowering awesomeness and consolidating the bridge to a global, cosmopolitan world. Images of this Nigerian Pastoral were disseminated throughout Nigeria, and the style was widely copied – with similar houses popping up around Igboland and beyond.

The second phase saw a breakdown in the relationship due to Nollywood’s tendency to flip the houses into the “money-making aesthetic”, the opposite of the homeowners’ intentions. In Phase Three, the scene and cluster articulated in a new way, resulting in a series of innovations. These included the commodification of domestic space, the movement of the house scene to a new city and the emergence of new types of spaces that melded elements of film studios and living residences.

In the case of the hotel scene, the switch from the “aesthetic of money authentication” to the “aesthetic of money making” occurred in the 1980s, prior to the entwinement with Nollywood. From early twenty-first century, the entanglement between Nollywood and the hotel scene began to flourish. Unlike the houses, the hotels already had a *money-making aesthetic* so there was no crisis in the relationship with Nollywood. Nollywood’s star culture complemented the kind of activities that were already going on at the hotel’s bars and restaurants and enhanced them as places for developing financing networks.

In the subsequent decade, hotels continued to provide useful lodging spaces for cast and crew, However, there was a rising discontent with hotels as shooting locations, mainly due to the increasing scale and professionalization of film production. The shooting and lodging hotels therefore followed increasingly different trajectories from this time. Several of the lodging hotels have now established formal associations with the stars, whose names and faces now adorn the hotels’ marquees. The owners and managers of the hotels have become so socially integrated into the film business that some have now ventured into the film business themselves, using their own hotels to lodge their crews.

In the case of the “shooting” hotels, there were several innovations in response to the needs of the new style and scale of film production. In some cases, hotels’ interiors have been temporarily transformed using sophisticated new set-construction techniques to match the productions’ exact specifications. A second response was to create entirely new types of buildings, melding together aspects of film studios and hotels. As in the case of the new melded housing estates, these forms represented a development of the Nigerian Pastoral.

Both the Nollywood house and hotel scenes had wider industrial significance, especially for investor marketing activities. This was explored in the case of honorific Nollywood courtesy visits to the houses, which were often organized in the hotels. This development is important as it reflects the de-linking of “Nollywood” from the film industry and its emergence as an autonomous cultural brand associated with the awesomeness and huge scale of the Nigerian Pastoral.

Part 2: Materials, Techniques and Technologies

Part 2 considers the ways in which the particular productive capabilities within Nigeria have come together to produce unique products. It explores the specificity of materials, techniques and technologies in the Nigerian production process.

Chapter 5: Theories of Craftsmanship

Introduction: Chapter 5

Chapter five responds to a substantial but diverse literature about the relationship of craft and high-output practices within the value chain. The first genre of this literature deals with manufacturing whilst the second looks at media production. Building on the former, the argument develops Adamson's studies of craft, which points to its function both in the pre-production and in the marketing stages of the value chain. The chapter then engages with Scranton's sophisticated classification, which deepens our understanding of craft and its place in the economy in terms of market orientations. This classification is reflected upon with reference to the work of Foster, which deals with the shifting place of craft, rebalancing between production, marketing and active consumption.

In order to explore the relevance of the discussion of craft in manufacturing in the specific case of the film industry, it is helpful to consider the different nature of materiality in such a sector. Therefore, the second literature genre with which I engage deals with media production. Meyer's approach is well-adapted for understanding materiality in this context. Her specific contribution can be best understood through a contrast with that of Ingold. His conception of materiality is somewhat akin to tactility. For him, when analysing the creation of the *mise-en-scène*, the physical interaction of craftsmen, tools and materials would be key. By contrast, Meyer is specifically concerned with vision: both in terms of the figuration of material pictures as mental images and the expression of mental images as physical pictures. For her, the key to understanding the *mise-en-scène* is as the materialization of the director's mental image, followed by the imaging of scene by the camera sensor and then the figuration of this image by viewers.

The chapter then uses the work of Tunstall to integrate the two sets of approaches. He argues that the success of the early-twentieth-century American media industries was based on its special combination of large-scale marketing with craft production techniques. I acknowledge the value of this approach but modify it to create a framework that takes into account the variety of functions within production and marketing in the film industry.

As all the production spaces – both manufacturing workshops and film studios – do not exist in isolation, it is also necessary to consider how they are influenced by wider circulations in the Nigerian economy. Here I introduce Urban’s work on dissemination and replication to analyse the entry of externally fabricated objects and mediations into the local productive arena.

This approach is used to explain a development in the style of Nigerian interiors, both on the film-set and in real houses. This shift from the Razzmatazz to the Glamour style, is described here and analysed in the following chapter.

From Razzmatazz to Glamour

Over the past decade, there has been a subtle change in the texture of Nigerian interiors, both in and outside of the screen.¹ A new “Glamour” sensibility emerged and an earlier “Razzmatazz” style - whilst still prevalent - has retreated. These styles go beyond appearance - representing changing cultural orientations and therefore can be understood as competing forms of the Nigerian Pastoral.

The earlier Razzmatazz style had two conflicting characteristics. The first was a propensity towards opulence and elaboration (tending towards baroque in the

¹ I observed the Razzmatazz style widely in houses I visited across both Lagos and Igboland. This impression was corroborated through interviews with interior designers, architects and house owners. In addition, I observed this style across a wide range of Nollywood movies, which was corroborated through interviews with Nollywood art directors and set designers. I observed the Glamour style on the sets of television shows (including *Project Fame* and *Tinsel*) filmed in Nigeria’s leading studios, Ultima and MNET Studios, as well as on the set of Nigeria’s first interior-design television show, *Interiors by Design*. This style only occasionally appeared in the interiors of real houses at the time of the research, but was creeping in to other forms, such as promotional installations.

plasterwork). It included furnishing the rooms with a range of imported objects: big TVs, Persian rugs, Ottoman sofas, chairs upholstered with a distinctive regal/colonial orange leather and elaborate dining sets as well as mini-bars. The second characteristic was a sparseness and spatial organization that accentuated the sense of vastness and voids in the rooms. This included: large areas of blank wall, very little ornamentation, interior balconies and mezzanines, sweeping staircases, and high ceilings.

In this style, there was a distinct positioning of furnishings, so that the layout would direct the guest's gaze towards certain objects: a refrigerator, for example, would be displayed in a prominent position, "here they deal with more than less, so you want to see everything- everything must be seen!"² This effect was exaggerated by the combination of elaborate or flashy objects framed by large blank spaces.

In addition, the style had a popular association with Juju (especially as indicating a setting for cannibalistic practices) and houses in the Razzmatazz style were at times referred to as *Ogwu-ego houses* (blood money houses). In connection with this, Razzmatazz was associated with a jarring and melodramatic style of editing, especially the use of special effects. Pat Nebo described this particular association, "Most of our films were laced with Razzmatazz. Somebody would touch a bottle, everything would vanish!"³

Lastly, the Razzmatazz style conveyed a specific kind of realism. Alessandro Jedlowski has argued that this "melodramatic realism" is created by the intrusion of everyday life into the picture - through unwanted noises and unintentional extra-filmic elements in the background (for example if the film was shot in the streets of Lagos). This intrusion reminded the audience of the extra-filmic world and gave the movies a special kind of realism as they seemed to be part of the "real" extra-filmic world. Jedlowski provides a powerful example of this effect,

the imperfection of the special effects, instead of reducing the images' verisimilitude, ends up, at least in my view, accentuating it. The goat is physically killed in front of the camera and the scene has

² Interview with Director Yinka Akambi, 5 June 2015.

³ Interview with art director Pat Nebo, 19 February 2016

a strong impact on the viewer, who feels directly involved in the sacrifice.⁴

The new Glamour style is characterised by “blur”. This blurring constituted an aesthetic that was non-specific, evocatively gesturing towards other times and places in a subtle way. It included patterns that evoked African symbolism, without actually being of any place. They could absolutely not be of a particular tribe, although they could evoke a tribal feeling. Leo, the art director of Tinsel, recalled a conversation on the matter with a member of the team,

He said, ‘Is it ethnic?’” I was like ‘No! It looks native but it is not ethnic!’ This shape doesn’t mean shit, it’s nothing! It just looks, it has a disorder that makes it look irregular.⁵

Even when the pattern was general to an entire country, the reference was considered to be overly explicit. Tinsel at one point dressed a Ghanaian character’s room with a piece of Kente cloth. The art director carefully picked a piece that was not of the classic yellow-green variety so that the symbolism was not too intrusive. However, the reaction was extremely negative, with both the audience and production company finding the reference too explicit, leading to the cloth being replaced with plain wallpaper.

Africa-referencing designs that were deemed commensurate with glamour incorporated bold, bright colours, and a motif of blockish shapes (sometimes geometrical, sometimes in the general form of animals). The motif would often combine a structure with a degree of abstraction. Leo was aware that the style could evoke certain associations but was adamant that these were not explicit, describing one wallpaper design as “almost floral but not distinctly floral.”⁶ The ornamentation (such as statuettes or paintings) sometimes incorporated more distinct imagery. This

⁴ Jedlowski, A., “Videos in Motion: Processes of Transnationalization in the Southern Nigerian Video Industry: Networks, Discourses, Aesthetics.” PhD diss., Università degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale (2010), 163.

⁵ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016.

⁶ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016.

again avoided any specific cultural references: it usually invoked the natural or idealized elements of village life, such as fish, cowry shells, women carrying calabashes overhead, and elephant tusks.

The blurring also applied to the interpretation of western imagery. Certain impersonal genres tended to be evoked. For instance, hotels are a regular source of inspiration, with bedrooms appearing like the rooms in Nigerian hotel chains [which themselves were mimicking multi-national hotels]. “Office-style” was also influential, with certain elements such as desks used to evoke the “home-office”.

The Glamour style also involved a different approach to ornamentation and patterning. In the Razzmatazz style, a room could contain objects with discordant patterning. In contrast, in a house of the Glamour style, there would be more concern for harmony, so that patterned objects would be offset by a majority of plain or simple-patterned objects. In this style, the elaboration tended to be in the statuettes and artistic ornaments and less on the walls and fabrics.

Lastly, the Glamour style presented a different kind of realism to Razzmatazz. The Glamour style was often commended for doing a better job at “looking real” than in the older form. This meant that there were not the “intrusions” of the Razzmatazz realism, and the audience were not constantly reminded of the film-making process and could therefore enjoy a more conventional style of realism.

Building a theoretical approach

This chapter explores the emergence of a new Nigerian Pastoral, expressed in materials, techniques and technologies - in the domestic interiors as well as in other arenas. In 2011, when I first became interested in the topic, UNCTAD had just brought out its Creative Economy Report,⁷ a novel attempt to apply the creative industries concept to developing countries. The report proposed a concept of creative industries in which production and consumption were in close proximity and which involved the creation of products with a strong narrative element, often with a high level of “reflexivity”. In more concrete terms, the new creative industries category brought

⁷ UNCTAD, *CER2008 the Challenge of Assessing the Creative Economy: Towards Informed Policy-making* (Geneva: United Nations, 2008).

together two types of industry: craft-manufacturing industries (traditional crafts, “speciality” industries, flexible-specialization industries, “experience” orientated products) with media industries (film, TV, publishing, photography, online).

I start by considering two approaches that conceptualize the processes through which new styles, designs and products emerge in the craft-manufacturing arena. These two orientations - innovations and cultural improvisation - take radically different approaches to the issue. The field of innovation studies was selected as the starting point because it has served as the orthodoxy for understanding industrial change and also as a foil for many scholars in the field of craft studies, who have used innovation as a category against which they have defined craft. Coming from the discipline of anthropology, Tim Ingold has proposed “cultural improvisation” as an alternative way of understanding continuity and change in production practice.

Innovation Approach

Naushad Forbes and David Wield argue that the aim of their approach is to explore how businesses can build competitiveness (especially internationally) through increasing the value-added in production.⁸ They argue that in order to achieve this objective, a particular process is needed. This process involves the development of technological capabilities, which are the skills needed to be able to use a technology.

The process encompasses two main steps of technological learning. The first step is “process innovation”, which means learning how to produce already existing products. This involves gaining the basic ability to reproduce an imported product, followed by learning how to produce it competitively, often based on low-cost labour. Following this, it entails improving the production process, through such activities as “design for manufacturability”, in which the products are redesigned to make manufacture easier.

The second step involves the move from “process” to “product innovation”. This includes both making the products with better specifications, and the creation of

⁸ N. Forbes and D. Wield, *From Followers to Leaders: Managing Technology and Innovation in Newly Industrializing Countries*. (London: Routledge, 2002).

completely new products. Forbes and Wield argue that in technology followers (developing countries), the main sources of new products are new designs - which are also key to “flexible specialization”. They argue that the crucial feature of design is the matching of techniques and markets, so that different styles are adopted for different market segments. Lorenzen expands the point to emphasize that, in the creative industries, this is a highly interactive process.⁹ He argues that in such industries there is a dual process, facilitated by the role of marketing. This involves co-ordinating product to market (using market research to modify the product to fit the market), and co-ordinating market to product (using marketing to modify the market to fit whatever the manufacturing process has managed to produce).

Cultural Improvisation Approach

Tim Ingold defines cultural improvisation in contrast to innovation.¹⁰ He characterizes innovation as working in a backwards direction, by starting with the results and then working back to understand the process. He argues that the innovation idea of creativity is a form of bricolage - the recombination of already existing elements. He sees design as crucial to innovation theory. In this view, design is understood as the transcription of a preconceived form, with technique and interactive processes not playing a central role.

In contrast to innovation, Ingold argues that cultural improvisation works in a forward direction, showing how dynamic processes are constantly producing new forms. The approach draws strongly on the idea of performativity, in which the unit of analysis is performance rather than texts. In this approach, the world is not made up of static discrete bits: production is more like the painting of a picture than the putting together of a jigsaw puzzle or the printing of a design.

⁹ Mark Lorenzen and Lars Frederiksen, *On the Economics of Innovation Projects: Product Experimentation in the Music Industry*, DRUID Working Paper No. 05-23 (Copenhagen: Danish Research Unit for Industrial Dynamics, 2005)

¹⁰ Tim Ingold, “Introduction”, in *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 45–54

In this performativity-orientated view, processes and products do not have beginnings or ends. The creation of a picture, for example, does not start with the idea of the picture or end with its completion, it is shaped by previous pictures and shapes subsequent ones, so each painting (or “performance” of the picture) “is just one moment in a work’s concrescence.”¹¹ In this schema, copying is crucial in the process of cultural reproduction. Complete replication is in fact impossible, as there are differences within repetition, so it is therefore “rhythmic but not metronomic.” In Ingold’s view, a work comprises the trail of its performances - it is a copy of a copy of a copy - and therefore every original is a copy of a previous instantiation, and every copy is an original for future performance. This integrated process of copying and originating can be termed *rhythmic reproduction*.

To illustrate this rather abstract argument, Ingold presents a case study of the practice of *kampi kolam* in Southern India. *Kampi kolam* is a craft-form practiced by women, which involves drawing patterns of interwoven lines around sequences of dots. Ingold cites previous scholars’ criticism of this craft as being uncreative, because the women often copy the patterns from printed pattern books. However, he shows that in the process of the drawing, the patterns almost take on a life of their own, described locally as “varum” or the “coming” of the line. Although the women do have “proto-designs” in the pattern books, the enactment of a new pattern encompasses remembering these in an imperfect way and the following of new and unexpected paths. He explains this as a “rhythmic” enactment of the drawing process in which the artist is learning, remembering (both from the pattern book but crucially also from previous enactments) and reproducing the drawing of the patterns.

In devising the concept of “cultural improvisation”, Ingold drew heavily on the work of Alfred Gell. Engaging directly with Gell’s earlier work, especially his essay on “The Technology of Enchantment” is helpful for gaining a full appreciation of Ingold’s perspective. In this work, Gell suggested that the defining feature of artworks is not that they are beautiful but that they are *made* beautiful, that they are the outcome of technical processes; their “‘excellence’ being a function, not of their characteristics simply as objects, but of their characteristics as *made* objects, as products of

¹¹ Tim Ingold, “Introduction”, 50

techniques”¹². It is the mystery of the technical practices used to bring such objects into being that gives them a quality that he terms “the enchantment of technology.” The technical processes are thought of as magical and the enchanted products they produce direct the viewers’ attention back to this magical process of creation:

It is the way an art object is construed as having come into the world which is the source of the power such objects have over us – their becoming rather than their being.¹³

He is therefore arguing that the process of making leaves an imprint on the finished product, and that the value of the product to a viewer is in the making-process that the object conveys, rather than in the object itself.

Craft displacements and combinations

Ingold’s cultural improvisation is concerned with the interplay of rhythmic hand motions and materials, whereas Forbes and Wield’s concept of innovation is about the interaction between skilled technicians and machines. In my empirical case - and most likely many others - both of these sets of relationships are important. Although Ingold and Forbes and Wield’s rendering of their approaches might appear to be mutually exclusive, both are in fact centrally concerned with the challenge of building a bridge between the two concepts.

In Forbes and Wield’s case, they emphasise the potential for “flexible specialization”, which, they argue, combines the advantages of both craft and automated-production in that it provides both the flexibility of the former and high-output/low-cost of the latter.¹⁴ They argue that this can take two forms. The Japanese model involves innovations in factory organization and industrial engineering, including just-in-time manufacture, less departmental and worker specialization and small-batch production. Second, the Italian model involves clusters of SME firms that are “spatially concentrated and sectorially specialized”, so that each firm has deep local forward and backwards linkages.¹⁵ In the backwards direction, this means that they are

¹² Alfred Gell, “The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology,” in *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, ed. Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 40–63 on p. 43

¹³ Gell, “The Technology Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology”, p. 46.

¹⁴ Forbes and Wield, *From Followers to Leaders*

¹⁵ Forbes and Wield, *From Followers to Leaders*, 72.

able to obtain machine tools and other capital goods which have been developed by local firms whom are sensitive to their needs. In the forwards direction, it means they have a much closer knowledge of their markets through a shared culture. This approach is near to that of the original “creative industries” literature, which saw the “experience economy” as the next evolutionary stage for countries that had already developed extensive manufacturing industries.

Forbes and Wield’s “flexible specialization” resuscitates some of the advantages of the craft production concept, including a strong interplay with markets, which will be crucial for the latter part of my argument. However, it does not retain a role for craft in Ingold’s sense of hand technique. Ingold attempts to build a combined approach through a different strategy. In his argument for embodied practice over original design, he parallels his own argument with that of the early craft theorist David Pye in *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*.¹⁶ Ingold points to Pye’s distinction between the workmanship of certainty and the workmanship of risk. The workmanship of certainty is associated with the automated aspects of production that “proceeds by way of a pre-planned series of operations, each of which is mechanically constrained to the extent that the result is predetermined... [the workman] cannot alter course in mid-flow.”¹⁷ This contrasts with the workmanship of risk, which is the non-predetermined technique of applying a constraint manually, exercising “care, judgement and dexterity... continually to make fine adjustments to keep on course.”¹⁸ The outcome is therefore “at risk” whilst the object is being crafted.

Pye contrasts the example of handwriting, as the workmanship of risk, with that of type-set printing, as the workmanship of certainty. Although type-set printing would seem to be the most pre-determined form of activity, Pye argues that it actually represents a displacement of the workmanship of risk. He points towards the extreme “riskiness” involved in engraving, casting, and compositing the steel type - which in his view involves even more dexterity and judgement than the handwriting process.

Recent craft theorists have taken on this theme of craft displacements, and developed it into a more encompassing approach. Glenn Adamson has made a particularly important contribution, arguing that craft has filled in the gaps in specialization that have continually

¹⁶ David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship* (Cambridge: University Press, 1968).

¹⁷ Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold, “Creativity and Cultural Improvisation: An Introduction,” in *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 1–24. on p. 13.

¹⁸ Hallam and Ingold, “Creativity and Cultural Improvisation”, 13

opened up in the history of technological and industrial development. In his first example, he points to the case of early-nineteenth-century Britain where craftsmen were increasingly called in to fill a gap that was opening up between (mathematically based) sketches and actual production.

Adamson goes on to identify four key areas of “second-order workmanship” to which craftsmanship has been displaced: prototyping, tooling, finishing and repair. Tooling refers to the making of tools, including patterns and moulds as well as “templates, jigs, machines and other shape-determining systems.”¹⁹ Adamson places particular emphasis on craft displacement into this tooling function, arguing that whilst craftsmen had previously directed their skill towards “the objects produced; now it is expended on the machines, tools and materials to produce them.”²⁰ In most industries, there are now expansive “tooling chains” or systems in which one tool makes another that makes another etc. At the most “upstream” point or source of these chains many of the traditional craft skills, such as carpentry, casting, smithing and masonry have continued to be important. Patterning is a key element of tooling - traditional casting, for example, requires the hand carving of a wooden pattern, from which a negative mould would be made in iron, from which the final cast-iron object would be formed.

Alongside tooling, finishing is another essential form of “second-order workmanship.” Adamson argues that in nineteenth-century Britain, the hand-finishing skill of accurately imitating the surface of an object (such as through painting or filing) became hugely valuable, “paradoxically due to the very mass production technologies that threatened to replace them.”²¹ Whereas the new machines could mass-produce goods through the initial manufacturing stages, craft techniques were still needed to complete the process. In that period, it included finishing for many machine-tool-made objects like the interchangeable parts of guns. Although gun-manufacture has changed, many mass-produced consumer goods - often made from softer materials - continue to require these craft finishing techniques, such as the assembly of garments, carving of furniture, and the painting of papier maché. Finishing is also an interesting area of craft displacement as it marks the point at which production melds into marketing (specifically promotion) - such as in a product’s decoration and packaging.

¹⁹ David Pye, *The Nature and Art of Workmanship*, 6.

²⁰ Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 146. Here Adamson is quoting Raphael Samuel.

²¹ Adamson, *The Invention of Craft*, 145

The connection between craft displacement and the production-marketing chain has been taken up by the historian of technology Philip Scranton.²² Like Ingold and Adamson, Scranton's focus is craft production, but rather than seeing it as an embodied or autonomous practice, he argues that it is defined by its relationship with markets.

Scranton's key analytical distinction is between production 'formats': contrasting *routinized* with *speciality* formats. (Fig 1) Routinized production involves the fabrication of a small range of goods for stable markets. Speciality production, by contrast, requires the production of an ever-changing variety of "styled" goods for heterogeneous, unpredictable and fluctuating markets. Each production format has two sub-types, relating to unit production quantities, technologies and skills. Routinized production is divided into 'bulk' and 'mass'. Bulk production involves the fabrication of staple products (such as T-shirts, screws or sandwiches) with simple technology by low skilled workers. Mass production, concerns the production of higher-value-added standardized goods (such as spun cotton, cigarettes or computer chips) using capital-intensive technology. Speciality production is divided into the 'custom' and 'batch' categories. Custom production involves making tailored products for individual customer orders (such as tailored clothing, wedding cakes, special-order cabinetry, turbines or ships). The other speciality format, batch production, concerns the production of product lots in response to multiple advance orders (such as ready-to-wear styled clothes, magazines, household furniture or machine tools).

²² Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Product Groups by User Class and Producer Formats (Selected Examples, ca. 1890–1920)				
	<i>Custom</i>	<i>Batch</i>	<i>Bulk</i>	<i>Mass</i>
Producer durables	Turbines	Most machinery and machine tools Pumps and steam engines Pyrometers and precision instruments	Belting	Standard steel rail Typewriters Telephones (leased)
	Special machinery		Chain	
	Conveyor systems		Mill hardware	
	Cast metal patterns		Wire mesh and screen Pipe and tubing	
Producer nondurables including intermediate goods and fuel	Cutting tools	Ferrous and nonferrous alloys Special yarns Metal parts and components Stationery Specialty chemicals	Screws, rivets	Fuel oil Mild steel Newsprint
	Ship plate		Staple yarns	
	Single-use foundry patterns		Files	
	Linotype and offset plates		Packing waste Wrapping paper Lubricating oil and grease	
Consumer durables	Special-order cabinetry, furnishings, jewelry, or carriages	Household furniture	Door hinges	Household wiring and switches “Dollar” watches Sewing machines
		Carpets	Window glass	
		Silverware	Kitchen accessories	
		Musical instruments China and glassware	Linoleum and oilcloth	
Consumer nondurables	Tailored clothing	Magazines and journals	Work clothing and shoes	Soaps and cleansers Cigarettes Canned foods Lightbulbs Refined sugar and flour
	Wedding cakes	Costume jewelry	Cigars and pipe tobacco	
	Catered foods	Ready-to-wear styled clothes	Sheeting and towels	
		Silk hosiery		

Fig. 1: Speciality-Routinized table, reproduced from Scranton, [Endless Novelty](#)

The routinized and speciality production formats comprise contrasting types of technologies, skills and knowledge. These contrasts correspond to the different objectives of the two formats: optimizing flow on the one hand (routinized format) and flexibility on the other (speciality format). Routinized production has led to the development of single-purpose or “special” machines that are designed to produce one specific type of good as rapidly as possible. In contrast, speciality production uses multi-purpose machines and tools (such as the turret lathe and Jacquard loom) that can be easily adjusted to accommodate variations in the goods being ordered. The skills associated with the two formats also correspond to these technologies. Routinized production employs a mixture of semi-skilled workers who engage in repetitive tasks and engineers who monitor the running of the automated equipment. Conversely, speciality production requires workers to be skilled in “shop-floor problem solving” and employ a “craft” - rather than engineering - knowledge in order to improvise in the customization and use of these technologies. Since the turn of the twentieth-century, about

which Scranton was writing, the routinized formats in advanced industrial economies have become relatively less important, whilst the batch format has become relatively more important. This recalls Forbes and Wield's emphasis on flexible specialization and small-batch production.

Scranton's production formats model does not map perfectly onto the Ingold/Adamson craft-automation dichotomy. Indeed, part of the originality of his classification lies in the fact that his formats do not correspond to scale or automation. It seems implausible that Ingold would accept turbine-production as "cultural improvisation" since it centres on the use of machines that he would identify with the "workmanship of certainty." Notwithstanding, Scranton's category of "speciality" would fit their idea of craft more closely than that of "routinized", and his sub-category of "custom" would have the closest sympathy of all. Overall, his four-way classification seems to offer a more fine-grained framework than Pye's simpler risk-certainty distinction. Certainly, it is capable of locating the craft displacements in a more precise way. Pye's example of the printing press, for example, could be helpfully characterized as a combination of custom production (in the engraving and compositing of the letters) and batch production (in the printing of the books).

In addition to craft-displacements between the different parts of the production process, Scranton's concept raises the issue of displacements between such different stages in the whole value chain, as production and marketing. An important division in Scranton's work is between consumer and producer goods, which cuts across the four production-format sub-types. He argues that the speciality-producer segment underpins the entire routinized format (both consumer- and producer segments) through its fabrication of tools and machines [Sector A, figure 2] In this sense, his approach is very similar to that of Adamson regarding the craft displacements around tooling.

At this point, there is an eccentricity in Scranton's argument. Whereas he sees production as defined - or even determined - by markets, he retains a fundamental productionist outlook. In particular, an investigation of the implications for displacements between speciality production formats and *marketing* is conspicuously absent. Whilst he emphasizes that the *speciality-producer* segment underpins tooling for the *routinized* format, the *speciality-consumer* segment - apparently - has no equivalent inter-linkages. My suggestion is that this segment plays a crucial role in marketing (especially promotion) for the routinized format, just as the speciality-producer segment plays in its tooling. [Sector B, figure 2] The closest Scranton gets to such an argument is a brief mention that part of the (speciality) New York printing industry's business came from mass-production companies placing adverts for their products.

However, he does not explore, for example, whether the speciality consumer sector had a role in the fabrication and decoration of exhibition and trade-fair venues, which he acknowledges as a key promotional arena of the period.

	<i>Custom</i>	<i>Batch</i>	<i>Bulk</i>	<i>Mass</i>
Producer durables	Turbines Special machinery Conveyor systems Cast metal patterns A	Most machinery and machine tools Pumps and steam engines Pyrometers and precision instruments	Belting Chain Mill hardware Wire mesh and screen Pipe and tubing	Standard steel rail Typewriters Telephones (leased)
Producer nondurables including intermediate goods and fuel	Cutting tools Ship plate Single-use foundry patterns Linotype and offset plates	Ferrous and nonferrous alloys Special yarns Metal parts and components Stationery Specialty chemicals	Screws, rivets Staple yarns Files Packing waste Wrapping paper Lubricating oil and grease	Fuel oil Mild steel Newsprint
Consumer durables	Special-order cabinetry, furnishings, jewelry, or carriages B	Household furniture Carpets Silverware Musical instruments China and glassware	Door hinges Window glass Kitchen accessories Linoleum and oilcloth	Household wiring and switches "Dollar" watches Sewing machines
Consumer nondurables	Tailored clothing Wedding cakes Catered foods	Magazines and journals Costume jewelry Ready-to-wear styled clothes Silk hosiery	Work clothing and shoes Cigars and pipe tobacco Sheeting and towels	Soaps and cleansers Cigarettes Canned foods Lightbulbs Refined sugar and flour

Fig. 2: Annotated speciality-Routinized table, reproduced from Scranton, *Endless Novelty*

In order to develop this line of thinking, it is helpful to consider the relationship Scranton draws between production formats and marketing strategies. He argues that the speciality format corresponds to the differentiation marketing strategy, as it involves the production of non-standard products for customers with heterogeneous needs that often requiring a high degree fashionable "styling" or customized technical complexity. He contrasts this with the "routinized" format that employs a cost leadership strategy, producing ever higher volumes of cheaper products for standard, stable markets. In line with this formulation, he argues that the speciality formats engage in far more extensive and sophisticated marketing efforts than the routinized format.

The argument here appears to represent a surprisingly incomplete approach to marketing strategy. Even in relatively well-worn marketing perspectives, such as Porter's *Competitive Strategies*, the differentiation strategy is not confined to products with functional differences.²³ Branding is used across both formats to differentiate products, but is especially widely used in the mass-production format. Even in the period of Scranton's analysis (1860-1920), many of the largest brands, such as Pear's Soap, were of the mass-production format. This is partly explained by the fact that mass-produced goods need branding to differentiate themselves, whilst speciality products are already distinct. This has echoes of Robert Foster's theory of balance, in which consumers need singularization - or differentiation - but this can be produced through either production or marketing techniques.²⁴ Scranton's overly simplified engagement with marketing strategies helps us to understand both why he did not see a link between the speciality-consumer production format and the marketing of the routinized format, and also why it is in fact a promising point of departure.

Whilst Scranton has created an intricate framework for analysing production formats, the preceding discussion suggests that an equally fine-grained and equivalent framework would be helpful for analysing marketing formats. Such a framework would adapt Scranton's production-orientated approach to think about craft displacements in relation to marketing. Although I have not constructed a framework, I have identified several categories of marketing that are key areas for craft displacements. These include event marketing (such as product launches, trade fairs and exhibitions), sales promotions (including point-of-sale installations, competitions and prize draws) and product packaging.

Further reflections on craft displacements between production and marketing

What is the wider significance of craft displacements between production and marketing? This question is taken up by the economic anthropologist Robert Foster.²⁵ Foster's starting point is Mauss's definition of products as being "to some extent part of persons."²⁶ Drawing on Kopytoff, he then makes the distinction between *commodification* and *singularization*

²³ Michael E Porter, *Competitive Strategy*. (New York: Free Press, 1980).

²⁴ Robert J. Foster, "Commodities, Brands, Love and Kula: Comparative Notes on Value Creation In Honor of Nancy Munn," *Anthropological Theory* 8, no. 1 (2008): 9–25.

²⁵ The analysis here is based on Foster's article, "Commodities, Brands, Love and Kula" and the quotations are from that work.

²⁶ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, ed. E.E Evans-Pritchard, trans. Ian Cunnison (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 11.

processes, analysing the development of mass-production as the “almost complete detachment [or alienation] of the producer’s personality from his product.”²⁷

Foster then follows Daniel Miller’s argument that the “alienated product” is often “re-attached to another personality, that of the consumer.”²⁸ Consumers do this through “consumption work”, in which they turn the commodified products into “personal, singular possessions.” He sees this partly as resulting from a fundamental disposition to engage in craftsmanship: consumers are now “pursuing projects of self-fabrication routinely denied them in the realm of production.” This argument has close parallels with that made by the historian of consumption Simon Bronner, who argued that a singularized, “touch orientated local world” of craftsmanship in production was transferred to a singularizing “consumership” in turn-of-the century United States.²⁹ Foster therefore concludes that the detachment from production has ultimately resulted in an almost symmetrical re-balancing in the relationship between production and consumption: “a two-sided process of value creation: extreme commodification on one side and consumer singularization on the other.”

Foster’s contribution to this discussion is to argue that much of what Miller identifies as “consumption work” is actually promotional work as it is being orchestrated by marketers engaged in branding. He sees “consumption work” as reflecting the achievement of a certain level of brand relationship or “Lovemarks”, in which the brand “establishes a relationship of trust with consumers, of empathy, of positive emotional response bordering on passion.”³⁰ Foster sees this as possible due to the commodification of the production process resulting in a “constructed ignorance” or “segmented knowledges”, in which the consumers have lost all knowledge of the real production process.

²⁷ Kopytoff argues that there are two counter-acting phenomena in every economy. Commoditization refers to the tendency towards universal exchangeability, whilst singularization refers to the tendency to exclude things from this and preserve a special status for them, which may be associated with the sacred or with traditional authority. See Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-91.

Foster’s concept of “singularization” here is clearly not identical to Adamson or Pye’s understanding of craft - Pye would reject that that the imbuing of an object with personality is a relevant outcome of craftsmanship, whilst Adamson would see it as just one of several important strands of craftsmanship. Gell does however, argue strongly for the connection between craftsmanship and the agency of the made object.

²⁸ Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987)

²⁹ Simon J Bronner, *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920* (New York: Norton, 1989).

³⁰ Foster, “Commodities, Brands, Love and Kula”, 16.

“Constructed ignorance” gives a space for marketers to orchestrate new connections between the different parts of the value chain. This can include the guided re-construction of consumers’ imaginaries about the production process. For example, James Carrier, in his analysis of imaginaries conveyed in mail-order catalogues, explores the case of the Smith and Hawkins garden tools catalogue.³¹ In this case, the catalogue matches tools to specific people who (it claims) designed and made them, and includes their personal biographies. In other cases, connections are built between consumers and marketers. Carrier points to the case of the Lands’ End catalogue, in which the photos and biographies are not of the makers of the clothes, but of those people who work in areas directly connected with customer satisfaction, including “customer sales, buyer, customer returns, quality assurance, specialty shopper, luggage maker, computer specialist, inseamer, order packer.”³²

³¹ James Carrier, “The Symbolism of Possession in Commodity Advertising”, *Man* 25, no. 4 (1990): 693–706.

³² Carrier, “The Symbolism of Possession in Commodity Advertising”, 699

Craft displacements and the film and television industry

What is the specific nature of craft displacements in media industries like film and television? In order to explore this issue, it is helpful to consider the different nature of materiality in media industries. The anthropologist Birgit Meyer has made an important contribution on this subject.³³

Birgit Meyer: “Aesthetic formations”

Meyer’s concept of “aesthetic formation” is similar to Ingold’s “cultural improvisation” in the sense that both consist of a converging, dynamic interplay or “conrescence” between “imagining actors.” However, the agents involved in the interplay are different in the two frameworks. In Ingold’s “cultural improvisation”, the interaction is between hand technique and materials. Conversely, in Meyer’s “aesthetic formations”, it is between mental imaginaries and pictorial media.

In Meyer’s view, a mental image requires a material medium in order to take a physical form - as a picture. These pictures, in turn, are re-assimilated to form new mental images. This interplay can be understood as chains comprised of the material expression of mental images as pictures and the figuration of pictures as mental images.³⁴ The media are not simply carriers of the images, but shape their materialization when they are externalized and their figuration when they are re-internalized. In this schema, imaginaries are distinct from images, as they include an “assemblage” of mental images and are shared throughout the “aesthetic formation” (i.e. the community). This sharing takes place through a process of “tuning” in which the pictorial media transmit and synchronize common tastes. Thus, Ingold has no role for the agency of pictorial media, whilst Meyer has little to say for the (direct) agency of materials.

The kind of senses emphasised in Meyer and Ingold’s approaches are correspondingly different. Those described by Ingold can be characterized as “fabricatory senses”, such as rhythmic hand motion and touch, which are of primary importance for making things. In

³³ Birgit Meyer, *Sensational Movies: Video, Vision, and Christianity in Ghana* (Oakland: California University Press, 2015)

³⁴ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 18.

contrast, the senses emphasized by Meyer are “interpretive senses”, such as listening and watching, which have a dominant role in taking in, perceiving and imagining the world.

Although both scholars emphasise the central place of materiality in their work, there are radical differences in the ways they conceive of it. Ingold’s conception of materiality is the more intuitive, and is somewhat akin to tactility. He argues that direct, material interactions antecede any other form of perception or social relations. For example, his discussion of Japanese calligraphy emphasises the visceral interplay between the calligrapher’s hand, the *sumi* (ink), the *kami* (paper) and the *suzuri* (ink stone), with the *sumi* as the main actor. In this sense, Ingold’s work is similar to the work of the sociologist Antoine Hennion, who coined the term “amateurism” to describe a private realm of direct pleasurable interaction with materials, sheltered from an external world coloured by such concerns as social distinction.³⁵

Meyer’s concept of materiality, on the other hand, is less intuitive. Instead of tactility, her concept of materiality seems to bear more similarity to the ideas of Aquinas, in which the light rays reflected from an object into someone’s eyes have a spiritually and physically transformatory effect. In her work on Ghanaian film-making, Meyer is not specifically interested in the material textures of the *mise-en-scène* in front of the camera. Rather, she is concerned with vision - both the kind that is visible to the naked eye as well as that which is not consciously seen - the ability of the camera lens to capture the narrative or spiritual properties of the *mise-en-scène*.

In this argument, the camera lens enables a “special kind of superior vision”, which is considered to provide insight into what is “real” beyond the capacity of the naked eye.³⁶ She argues that the lens has three properties that enable this: it can give a window into the spiritual realm - revealing the operations of “jujuish” forces, it compresses time (using cut-forwards and flashbacks) to clarifying the real causes of events, and it bridges spatial boundaries - so the audience can get a bird’s eye view of a whole scene (such as reaction shots). In a similar vein, and closer to my concerns, Walter Benjamin proposed the concept of the “optical unconscious.” In this concept, the use of such techniques as close-ups, time lapse,

³⁵ Antoine Hennion, Cecile Meadel, and Geoffrey Bowker, “The Artisans of Desire: The Mediation of Advertising between Product and Consumer”, *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 2 (1989): 191–209. Hennion’s work is part of a movement in sociology characterized by Nick Prior as a “‘Post-Bourdieu’ moment”, of which Georgina Born is another exponent. These sociologists have been influenced by anthropology, including the work of Alfred Gell. See Nick Prior, “Critique and Renewal in the Sociology of Music: Bourdieu and Beyond,” *Cultural Sociology* 5, no. 1 (2011): 121–138.

³⁶ Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 139

and enlargement conveyed aspects of materials beyond normal perception: “bringing to light entirely new structures of matter, image worlds... and movements with a curious gliding, floating character of their own.”³⁷

“Aesthetic formations” and film and television

Drawing together Meyer’s “aesthetic formations” and the craft scholars’ contributions, we can begin to fashion an approach for analysing craft-displacements in the film and television industries. A helpful springboard for this endeavour is the work of the media-historian Jeremy Tunstall. Looking at the cases of the musical theatre, film, news-publishing and television industries in early-to-mid-twentieth-century America, Tunstall has argued that they were successful in large part due to their craft-displacement structure. In this argument, outlined below in some detail, the media industries brought together “large-scale marketing and small-scale batch production” in a combination that proved to be unbeatable.³⁸

Considering first the production side, Tunstall points out how these early media industries closely replicated the small-batch production of the clothing sweatshop. In the case of the musical theatre of Tin-Pan-Alley, whilst the boss sat downstairs dealing with customers, upstairs “instead of a few people leaning over sewing machines, were a few people leaning over pianos.”³⁹ The scale and methods of labour division were also similar - instead of a few people working on each part of the garment, there would be a few working on words, music and song styles. There was a similar pattern of small-batch production in the early news-publishing industry and in the film and later television industries - with films and TV series continuing to be made in small batches.

Tunstall contrasts this with the marketing and distribution strategies, which were of an increasingly large and sophisticated scale - quickly reaching national and international levels through the use of new technologies including cinema-circuits, tele-typewriting and TV networks. Similarly, he argues that the media entrepreneurs mastered large-scale promotional strategies, drawing on their backgrounds in the garment industry where they dealt with the

³⁷ Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael William Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 37.

³⁸ Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Are American: Anglo-American Media in the World*, Communication and Society (London: Constable, 1977), 67

³⁹ Tunstall, *The Media are American*, 67

marketing of “volatile, luxurious, insecure things, of uncertain origin and uncertain value.”⁴⁰ Tunstall notes that the entrepreneurs were able to orchestrate these marketing strategies effectively because they remained very close to their audiences - the audiences in the theatres would give them direct feedback as their customers would when they were operating in small shops. He sums up the competitiveness of this craft-displacement model as based on providing “scale economies... high average standards of quality and also flexibility in response to current market demand.”⁴¹

Whilst the central contrast Tunstall makes is helpful, several refinements must be made to fully take account of the different stages in production and marketing and to modify his use of the “craft” concept in light of Scranton’s more subtle idea of “speciality” formats and Meyer’s reflections on “aesthetic formations.” It may be recalled that the discussion of “craft displacements” actually began with an example from the media industry, that of type-set printing. In this case, Pye pointed to the craft-practices of type-fabrication and typesetting, which occur prior to the “automated” activity of printing. The metal type production constitutes the tooling, specifically the patterning, from which the printed replications are made. Using Scranton’s schema, this craft-combination combines the custom-production of the type with the batch-production of the printing.

In order to analyse the film and TV production process, we can take this insight about printing and combine it with Meyer and Benjamin’s concepts of materiality and the “optical unconscious.” In light of these concepts, I have created two “optical relationship triangles” to represent the two most common configurations of set, lighting and lens in the production process. Whilst these are based on my specific empirical research in the Nigerian context, I propose that these can be used as general models.

The first configuration is *filmic*, in which the camera and lighting move around and do the main visual work, whilst the set is more passive and is not altered. (Fig. 7) Here, dramatic lighting, shifting focus (including close-ups), and framing provide the visual variety, and the set only sporadically provides the focal point. Scenes often require many takes with complex camera and boom set-ups, and a variety of camera-motion devices.⁴² Extreme lenses are often used, providing such effects as a large depth of field, super-zoom and “fish-eye” - resulting in an

⁴⁰ Tunstall, *The Media are American*, 71

⁴¹ Tunstall, *The Media Are American*, 67.

⁴² Including dollies, slides, tracks

atmospheric feel, “full of hues and tones... accentuating a particular look or mood.”⁴³ Often much time is spent in editing, through such processes as colour grading and special effects.

The second is the soap-opera style, in which the camera positions are relatively fixed, lighting is flat, but the set and costume are meticulously prepared and constantly changed. (Fig 8) Here, the whole set is in frame, there are not close ups or particularly great field-depth, and the entire set is brightly and evenly illuminated with “flat lighting.”⁴⁴ Usually three cameras are positioned around the perimeter of the set, they do not “cross the line”⁴⁵ and use a very limited range of shot types (usually fairly wide, with just “crane-up-down” camera motion variations - with the crane base fixed). The shooting and turn-around of episodes is very fast - with up to 20 scenes shot per day - and there is time for only minimal editing and no colour grading after the shoot - so the look of the picture cannot be significantly altered. In addition to sets, costumes play a very active role in this style. There is a principle of balance in the interplay of set and costume - so if one is more striking the other can have a more neutral design and passive story-telling role.

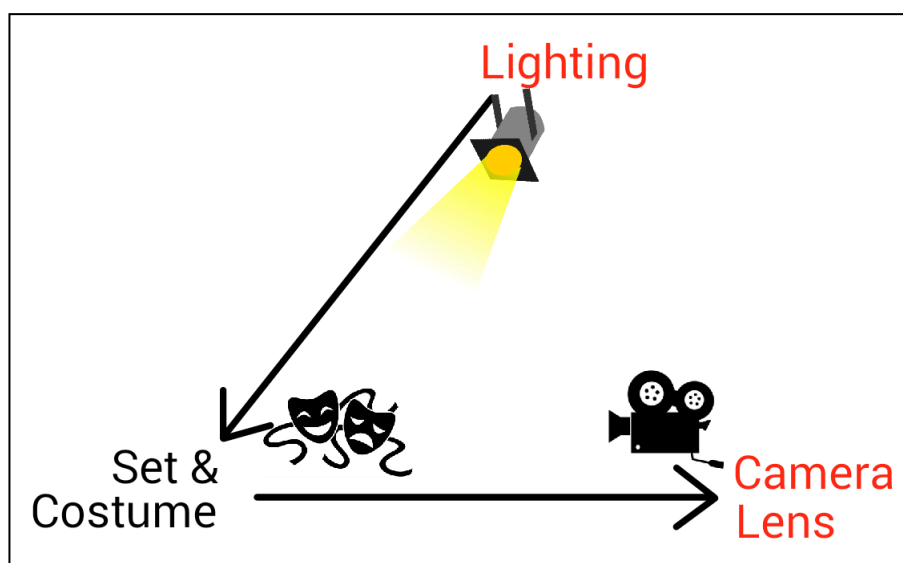


Fig 7. Optical relationship triangle: filmic style.

⁴³ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

⁴⁴ The type of lighting traditionally used in Nollywood films does not fit into either of these categories. Set Designer Leo described it as “pouring” - meaning that it was not carefully designed and tended to be minimal and insufficient.

⁴⁵ Interview with Art Director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

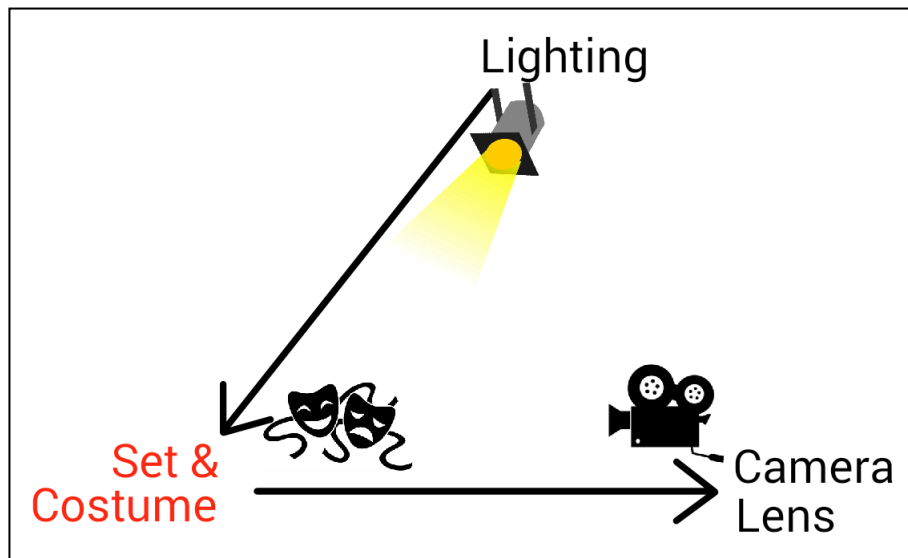


Fig 8. Optical relationship triangle: soap-opera style.

Returning to the discussion of craft displacements, we can conceptualize the *mise-en-scène* (the set and costume) as a kind of pattern-picture, which is replicated during the filming process. In both the filmic and soap-opera cases, the fabrication of the set is a custom-activity as only a single version of each set is constructed.⁴⁶ Also in both cases, the replication is a custom-batch hybrid, although it is more custom-like in the filmic case as it involves using a set to produce a single film, and more batch-like in the soap-opera case, as it uses the set dozens of times for the run of a show. The “hybrid” qualification is necessary as the “optical relationship triangles” also reveal a batch element for films and a custom element for soap operas. In the filmic relationship, multiple takes of the unaltered set are necessary for each film, whilst in the soap-opera style, the set is modified every time a shot is made.

Turning to Tunstall’s claim that the film and television industries employ mass-marketing, it is helpful to consider the distinction between distribution and promotion within marketing. His argument seems stronger in the case of distribution, in which his invocation of television broadcast and cinema circuits is powerful, although would need qualification for such examples as independent cinemas. In the case of promotion, the argument is somewhat less convincing. Tunstall acknowledges that advertising, for example, constitutes a further microcosm of the same combination of custom-production and mass-marketing seen in the media industries. My own research into Nollywood poster and jacket-printing sustains this

⁴⁶ I did encounter a number of exceptions to this rule, in which multiple copies of a single set were fabricated for various reasons.

point. The design of the poster is a highly customized art form, which involves a designer watching a film several times before coming up with the specific combination of images that would instantly distil the main lines of a movie's plot for an observer. The reproduction of the posters is then a custom-batch activity as already discussed in the case of printing.⁴⁷ The posters are then pasted on walls by teams (usually sub-contracted gangs of youths) in high volumes using brushes and starch paste in a low-technology routinized process that corresponds to Scranton's category of "bulk" production.

In his discussion of film-industry promotion, Tunstall emphasises the key role of certain imageries. He links the imageries employed by film studios with those of furriers and luxury fabric merchants, arguing that both traded in "dreams".⁴⁸ The craft displacement concept in itself does not explain the emergence of such imageries. Meyer's "aesthetic formations", on the other hand, shows how imageries develop through the "picture-image chains" and also how the physical properties of the media shape the imageries' formation.

Notwithstanding these issues around advertising and imageries, it is fair to characterize the TV industry as generally employing a "routinized" promotional format. However, this does not extend to the film-industry, certainly in Tunstall's American case. Indeed, one of Hollywood's key distinguishing marks is its use of *custom promotional* forms - especially in its heavy reliance on event-marketing - such as premieres and award ceremonies. In the Nigerian case, these were largely absent in the "traditional" Nollywood industry.⁴⁹ However, these forms have started to become important in the "New Nigeria Cinema".⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Using different technologies to the older type-set method.

⁴⁸ Jeremy Tunstall, *The Media Are American*

⁴⁹ "Traditional" Nollywood did have some examples of "custom" promotion, for example the marketer Don Pedro Obaseki described the use of specially-decorated buses with loudspeakers that would move around urban areas to promote and sell the videos. In the closely related Ghanaian industry, Birgit Meyer also gives the example of hand-painted posters advertising the films.

⁵⁰ The directors who identify with "New Nigeria Cinema" or "New Nollywood" are attempting to produce and distribute higher budget films for cinema distribution - often independently of Nollywood marketers. These include Obi Emelonye, Kunle Afonlayan, Mahmood Ali-Balogun and Stephanie Okereke.

Dissemination

In the literature explored in this section, an important phenomenon - that of the circulation of fabricated objects - has sat in the background but, with a couple of exceptions, not been brought into focus. In Forbes and Wield's analysis, import-substitution is an important theme in the "learning to compete" strategy. This involves "learning by analysing" which includes such techniques as reverse-engineering imported goods (e.g. televisions in Korea and pharmaceuticals in India). In Ingold's analysis, the topic receives less explicit attention, despite it seeming to be an important element. For example, in the discussion of the Indian craft form *Kampi Kolam*, the imported catalogue pictures that formed a reference point for the new artworks receive very little attention - with the thrust of his argument to de-emphasize their role.

Meyer gives more attention to such phenomena. For example, she highlights the circulation of a European poster in Nigeria in the late-nineteenth century, showing a south-Asian woman called Maladamajaute with a snake around her neck.⁵² The poster had a huge impact on the way that local wood-workers and other craftsmen subsequently fabricated pictorial representations of the Mami-Water mermaid-witches, which from then on bore a close resemblance to Maladamajaute. She also acknowledges the great importance of imported Nigerian films on the development of Ghanaian film production. Whilst Meyer delves deeply into the ways that these forms operated as pictures that stimulated new imaginaries, the topographies of their circulation are largely extraneous to her argument.

It is in Scranton's work, however, that the specific issues of circulation are fully integrated into the analysis of fabrication processes. Scranton argues that before the mid-1870s, imported European goods such as fabrics and jewellery were more popular than local products amongst the wealthy section of American consumers. This stimulated some degree of replication by local manufacturers, with success in the jewellery industry. However, copying the imported styles proved to be very challenging for some of the industries - such as fabrics and furniture - and led to a huge strain on the work flow. In these industries, it was very difficult to reverse-engineer the imported products and create their own versions in time to fit into the seasonal fashionable product cycles. Whilst tariff extensions helped to stimulate a limited expansion in local production, the real turning point for American speciality manufacturing came with the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. This was the first US exhibition at which foreign trade delegations presented their products in large numbers. Unintentionally, it was this up-

⁵² Birgit Meyer, *Sensational Movies*, 210-212.

close presentation of the top foreign goods that seemed to stimulate a revolution in American speciality production. Scranton argues that in response to the exhibition, “[the American manufacturers] went in and said, ‘We can make those goods; and they did it!’,” leading local production out of “an era of black broadcloth and haircloth furniture [and into] a higher plane.”⁵³

Whilst Scranton gives circulation a key role in his empirical narrative, a fuller theoretical framework is proposed by Greg Urban in his work on “cultural objects.”⁵⁴ The theory draws on early evolutionist and diffusionist anthropological approaches, including Tyler’s idea that cultural change could be understood as the motion of “capabilities and habits” between people and Schmidt’s “wave theory” in which linguistic changes diffused outwards from a point.

Urban outlines two main forms of cultural motion: *dissemination* and *replication*. The first form of cultural motion, *dissemination*, involves the acquisition of new cultural objects without oneself having to learn how to make them. *Replication*, on the other hand, is the copying of an object that has originated elsewhere.

Urban explains these forms of motion in terms of two types of object: thurmatic and athurmatic.⁵⁵ Thurmatic objects are defined as being hard to copy, whilst athurmatic ones are easy to copy. Thurmatic objects, such as an SUV or Chartres Cathedral, typically require a longer time and a greater number of producers to make than athurmatic ones, such as a simple ceramic pot (the term athurmata literally means “trinket”). Clearly, *dissemination* is likely to be coupled with thurmatic objects, whilst replication is associated with athurmatic ones.

In addition to explaining dissemination in terms of difficulty of copying, there are certain properties of objects that make them particularly easy to disseminate, and therefore copying especially unrewarding. Crucially, some objects are able to travel independently of their makers since they have “huge temporal longevity.” Urban gives the example of printed books,

⁵³ Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, second ed 2000), 85.

⁵⁴ Urban, G., *Metaculture: How Culture Moves through the World*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

⁵⁵ Urban, G., “Objects, Social Relations, and Cultural Motion.” in Bauer, A.A. and Agbe-Davies, A.S. eds., *Social Archaeologies of Trade and Exchange: Exploring Relationships among People, Places, and Things*. (London: Routledge, 2016)., pp.207-26.

which he argues led to a major shift from replication to dissemination. *For replication*, on the other hand, it is necessary to learn how to make the object.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ This learning process involves interpreting a physical object, analysing the materials and other indexes of its production process, and reverse engineering it, before producing the copied object.

Conclusion: Chapter 5

The analytical framework developed in this chapter has three levels. The first considers the fine grains of the reproductive process in manufacturing in terms of three alternative approaches: innovation, cultural improvisation and aesthetic formations. The second constitutes a higher-level analysis of the industrial structure in terms of “craft displacements”, which refers to the particular balance of speciality and routinized production in each sector. The third considers the relationship of these sectors with the wider external environment through the concept of dissemination and replication. The framework provides a toolbox for analyzing the emergence of new forms of furnishings, sets and promotional installations in Nigeria. This will be explored in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: “From Razzmatazz to Glamour”

Introduction: Chapter 6

In this chapter, I explore “craft displacements” in three areas: furniture carpentry, set-fabrication and promotional-installation production. These are considered initially against the backdrop of changes in the dissemination of imported and locally manufactured (multinational) mass-produced goods. The three areas were initially selected because they were the main activities in which the craftsmen in my study were engaged. Moreover, they represent a trans-sectoral complex of “consumer-orientated cultural industries” with strong connections between the furniture, entertainment-media and marketing industries.¹

The chapter’s structure mirrors the three forms by tracing the process of the emergence of each one and exploring how they are linked together. The first section on furniture carpentry traces a craft-displacement between marketing and production. The section on set-fabrication looks at a craft displacement within the production process, but with the added complexity of the television context. The section on subsequent developments in filmability considers recent developments in set fabrication and their impacts beyond sets, on furniture carpentry and clothing styles. The final section, on promotional installations for FMCG firms, combines the two: looking at a production-marketing craft displacement that incorporates the TV and film industry. It reveals how craft functions in different parts of the value chains of the respective industries. In this endeavour, I not only identify the broad “craft-displacements”, but also uncover the fine-grains of each reproductive process, drawing on Meyer’s “aesthetic formations”, and Ingold’s “cultural improvisation” and Forbes and Wield’s innovation.

Section 1: Furniture Carpentry

Historical developments

The mid-1970s saw Nigeria become a major world receiver of disseminated cultural objects.² The oil boom presaged the mass-importation of a panoply of goods including

¹ Sally Weller, “Beyond ‘Global Production Networks’: Australian Fashion Week’s Trans-Sectoral Synergies,” *Growth and Change* 39, no. 1 (2008): 104–122, on p.105.

² Whilst it was not until the 1970s that Nigeria had the spending power to be a leading importer of such goods, there had already been a revolution in the development of her consumer industries in the 1920s and 1930s. A large-scale expansion in the rail and particularly road networks, combined with rising accumulation from agriculture fuelled the import of consumer goods through the networks of European trading companies. See Tom Forrest, *The Advance of African*

cement, carpets, televisions, furniture, clothing and cars. This was however followed by oil-price crashes in 1979 and 1981, subsequent exhaustion of credit lines, a foreign-exchange scarcity and introduction of import controls.³ This second stage saw a radical reduction in the dissemination of western goods but an increase in the dissemination of foreign mediations into Nigeria.⁴

The country's media infrastructure developed rapidly at this time, in areas including television, print journalism and poster printing. Western television content, for example, was disseminated through a new television infrastructure. The 1979-83 Second Republic saw the pioneering use of television access as a political tool, with state governments extending TV provision to compete for votes.⁵ A 1983-4 study by Andrew and Harriet Lyons reported that 64% of households already had their own television and 83% had access to one.⁶ This extension enabled a massive importation of foreign media content. The funding problems of Nigerian stations from the mid-1980s meant that they replaced original production with western content in order to fill their schedules. In addition, video cassettes were imported (and copied) *en masse* - both of Hollywood movies and of events such as the Oscars and Grammys.⁷ Parallel developments occurred in the print-media industry. Whilst the Nigerian newspaper

Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994).

³Tom G. Forrest, *Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria* (Westview Press Boulder, CO, 1995).

⁴ Following Meyer, I use the term "mediations" to refer to such materials as furniture catalogues to emphasize the linkage their materiality provides to other worlds. See Birgit Meyer, "From Imagined Communities to Aesthetic Formations: Religious Mediations, Sensational Forms, and Styles of Binding." In *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion, and the Senses*, edited by Birgit Meyer (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 1-28.

⁵ Charles C. Umeh, "The Advent and Growth of Television Broadcasting in Nigeria: Its Political and Educational Overtones," *Africa Media Review* 3, no. 2 (1989): 54-66.

⁶Andrew P. Lyons, "The Television and the Shrine: Towards a Theoretical Model for the Study of Mass Communications in Nigeria," *Visual Anthropology* 3, no. 4 (1990): 429-456; Harriet D. Lyons, "Television in Contemporary Urban Life: Benin City, Nigeria," *Visual Anthropology* 3, no. 4 (1990): 411-428.

⁷ On dissemination of Hollywood cassettes, see. Brian Larkin, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).

and magazine industry expanded rapidly in the 1980s⁸, much content was syndicated from foreign newspapers,⁹ and foreign catalogues, magazines and newspapers were also imported and reproduced in bulk.

Razzmatazz

Copying mediations

Ola Uduku has shown that by the end of the 1980s, the dissemination of foreign mediations into Nigeria had already had a great impact on local styles of architecture and interior decoration, with the rise of the “Los Angeles House” in Lagos and Igboland.¹⁰

I shall argue that this pattern persisted, and was reflected in the style of interiors in Nigerian houses, forming the basis for the Razzmatazz Style. In my research with carpenters, copying was usually based on images in foreign catalogues, magazines or on screen. Customers would present carpenters with these catalogue pages or camera-phone snaps for copying, or the carpenter would take the initiative in choosing the design to copy. Carpenter Hakeem, for example, described how the majority of his customers would bring pictures from foreign furniture catalogues,

They come to me and say, 70% of them, they have brought their design. The bring picture from magazine, for example Ikea from UK, then Argos from UK, then Morris from Chicago.¹¹

⁸ The 1980s and beginning of the 1990s saw a rapid expansion in the independent Nigerian press, with new newspapers such as Concord (1980), The Guardian (1983), Newswatch (1984), Vanguard (1984), Timesweek (1990), Poise (1990), Citizen Magazine (1990), Tell magazine (1991) and The News magazine (1993). By 1991 there were thirty daily national newspapers, sixteen Sunday newspapers, ten weekly and ten monthly magazines.

⁹ Historian Emeka Keazor, Private Communication 6 June 2016

¹⁰ Ola Uduku, “The Urban Fabric of Igbo Architecture in South-Eastern Nigeria in the 1990s,” *Habitat International* 20, no. 2 (1996): 191–202. p171. Nigerian architecture had already been influenced by foreign styles, for instance through the immigration of African-diaspora returnees from Brazil. See John Godwin and Gillian Hopwood, *Sandbank City: Lagos at 150* (Lagos: Prestige (2012).

¹¹ Interview with independent carpenter Hakeem, 9 July 2015; Morris Furniture Company is actually located in Albert Lea, Minnesota

In his workshop in Surulere, Lagos, Hakeem had the Argos pages hanging from the wall to provide a guide whilst he carried out his work. Other carpenters described a similar phenomenon: Carpenter Moses often worked from the American interior design magazines, such as *Interiors*, whilst Mr Bedford preferred European interior design and furnishings publications, such as *Ideal Homes*. Amongst the less prosperous independent carpenters, these magazines were highly prized, with carpenter Yemi was very keen that I should send him the American magazine *Furniture*.



Fig 1. Wall of carpentry workshop. Lagos, June 2015



Fig. 2. Detail of wall of workshop showing Argos catalogue

The process for copying these pictures usually involved sketching a design based on the image. After examining the catalogue image, upholsterer Yemi, for example, would “now take my pen and a sheet bob, and sketch it out... the design”.¹² Often this procedure was integrated within the apprenticeship system. In carpenter Shei’s apprenticeship, the job of sketching the picture from the catalogue was reserved for his master, Mr Adekunle, and the apprentices then worked from his sketch. In other cases, the apprentices received little instruction from their master: they were simply given a catalogue page and expected to teach themselves to sketch, design and build the furniture,

AB: So, when you went to the company with Mr Bedford, who taught you new skills in upholstery?

Carpenter/Upholsterer Ewe: Nobody! He gave me the catalogue like this, I bring it out exactly like that.¹³

The carpenters felt enormous pride in their ability to copy these things precisely, with upholsterer Yemi explaining,

I have the catalogue, if I see the pictures, if they say they want to do anything, if I see the pictures, I will do it EXACTLY.¹⁴

The word “exactly” was repeated on numerous occasions by the carpenters when describing the similitude of their work and the catalogue pictures and it seemed to be the customers’ main means of specifying and valuating the jobs. The carpenters’ perseverance in their quest to make the perfect copy is perhaps illustrated by their acknowledgement of - and annoyance about - certain small details that were as yet unachievable in Nigeria. Designer Opejemi Daniel, for example, emphasized that the “only difference would be the texture in the leather, there is a difference between the leather [in the catalogue] and the finishing on the couch from a local person”, whilst designer Leo bemoaned that every aspect of a catalogue kitchen could be perfectly replicated except for the extraction-fan hoods.¹⁵

¹² Interview with upholsterer Akinola Bayemi “Yemi”, 6 August 2015

¹³ Interview with upholsterer Ewe, 11 July 2015

¹⁴ Interview with upholsterer Akinola Bayemi “Yemi”, 6 August 2015

¹⁵ Interviews with art director Arokari Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015; art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

The argument here is not that the Razzmatazz style straightforwardly replicated foreign settings, but that the specific mediations through which it was copied had unexpected effects on the newly originated objects. It is true that the appearance of foreignness was valued, with several of the carpenters boasting that their creations could pass as imports.¹⁶ However, the catalogue as a publishing format seems to have been a more powerful influence than an abstract idea of the “western”. Set designer/architect Leo, for example, perceptively argued that, “the home decor catalogue, that you see on the streets, may have informed our interiors more than a conscious international aspect”.¹⁷

The specific mediations were important as the copied furnishings took on a catalogue or marketing-material aesthetic: they are rendered in such a way that they lose their specificity. As in the tiny catalogue photos, the furnishings have a generic and air-brushed appearance. Carpenter Moses, for example, carefully studied the images and tried to replicate this smooth, textureless and contextless quality in his craftsmanship,

The first think I look is the colour, I will look at how they set it, how they position it, and the light they put, so I will not make any mistake.¹⁸

This orientation extends to the way the rooms are composed by designers and homeowners: the individual items appear out of context, either not harmonized with their surroundings (as in the solo item picture in the catalogue) or mimicking the placement in the pretend-room of the catalogue. Designer Leo, for example, gave the highest praise to the interior of a mansion owned by a big man called Prince, “His house - it’s lovely... it doesn’t look like a house, it looks like a catalogue building!”¹⁹

The ways of classifying furnishings were also influenced by the imported catalogues. The following example is an inventory list from the carpenter Hakeem. Only one name

¹⁶ See Interview with upholsterer Akinola Bayemi “Yemi”, 6 August 2015: “ Even imported [furniture], I will [copy it exactly], I will bring it down”; art director Opejemi Daniel, “When you look at the finishing and the wood and the style, you would think its imported”;

¹⁷ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

¹⁸ Interview with master carpenter Moses Inibwibewo, 25 July 2015

¹⁹ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

- the “carving chair” - appears to have local specificity - whilst the others could all have come straight from the catalogue:

Inventory list June 2005 - Hakeem Interior Decorations Co.

Dining table, settee, bed dressing table-mirror with stool, bunk bed, shelf, bed, standing wardrobe, bar, wardrobe, settee, carving chair, dining [table], bed, dining [table], centre table, bunkbed, L-shape [settee], L-shape [settee], single chair, kitchen cabinet, kitchen cabinet, kitchen cabinet, hanging cabinet, kitchen cabinet, child wardrobe, stool, wardrobe, bar, set of drawer, dining [table], dining [table], TV stand, hanging cabinet, big wardrobe, leather sofa, fabric sofa, fabric sofa, wardrobe, wall wardrobe.

In a similar vein, certain furnishings - which were considered odd and of no apparent use - were adopted from the catalogues. Side lamps - both standing and table-mounted - were singled out by several interviews as being dysfunctional and just “hanging around” - with no real use in a Nigerian household.²⁰ In some cases, categories of spaces that only existed as fantasies within very specific media (such as men’s magazines) were also copied, such as “man-caves” and “cougar apartments”.

The focus on pictorial representations of the furniture meant that great emphasis was put on copying the outer appearance and especially on finishing. On the other hand, carpenters were not attempting to mimic the internal structure of the items, so there was great room for free play in the fabrication process.

As a result of these specifications, particularly great importance was placed on the furnishings’ upholstery and other soft coverings rather than on their internal skeletons, with uncovered furnishings rare. Carpenter Moses emphasized that he and other skilled local carpenters had the capability to construct chairs with mortise-and-tenon joints, rather than simply nailing the wood together. However, he bemoaned that customers did not value this, and instead would choose chairs that were improperly joined but with more attractive upholstery. Together, we examined a chair that had been made with the mortise-and-tenon joints, with Moses exclaiming,

²⁰ Interviews with art director Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015; set artist Austin Ekhaiyeme, 23 November 2015

We morticed this chair, we put glue inside and put a nail inside... so that it will hold it stronger. If we [had] joined it, it will not last. The covering of this chair is also good. If it was not good, it couldn't last. The carpenter can see if [the inside] is good, but usually when a customer comes and sees it, he will not know, he will say it's nice, but he is not knowing the thing inside the chair.²¹



Fig. 3. Moses and the chair with a good covering. Lagos, June 2015

On some occasions, however, carpenters used the free play afforded to them (in regards to internal structure) in more productive ways - showing great improvisation in techniques and materials. Carpenters would often not have access to the electronic cutting, joining and edging devices so would use hand-crafting techniques in their place. Designer Leo described how he would use such techniques to create a table almost identical to the catalogue example,

We buy wedge boards, ply boards. So there we have some leverage, because the normal tables are too expensive.... So we found out that, if I want to build a table

²¹ Interview with master carpenter Moses Inibwibewo, 25 July 2015

that's like this, I might not have it machine-edged, so we going to hand-plumb the edges, but I can create something like this..²².

Carpenters also took advantage of the local abundance of high-quality tropical hardwoods, including Cedar, Black Ebony, Malaila and Weuepe. Carpenter Opa claimed that whilst an imported chair would usually last for the length of its guarantee (one or two years), a well-crafted local chair made from Nigerian hardwood would last for generations.

Conclusions on Razzmatazz and the catalogue aesthetic

Through the analysis of the “catalogue aesthetic”, we have seen an example of a “craft displacement” comprising the marketing²³ of mass-produced furniture, on one hand; and custom-production by the Nigerian craftsmen, on the other.²⁴ This craft-produced furniture has widely constituted the décor of large houses in Nigeria. As these properties have usually provided the shooting locations for Nollywood, this furnishing style has also contributed to the look conveyed by the films.

The overall nature of the craft displacement corresponds closely to Birgit Meyer's concept of an “aesthetic formation”. As in her argument, the technology of the pictorial media (the catalogues etc) played a strong role in shaping the fabricatory process. The displacement could be compared to Ingold's “cultural improvisation” in the sense that the newly reproduced forms (the Nigerian furnishings) bore a trace of the processes that made them. However, this trace was more a trace of the material picture or mediation from which the furnishings were copied than the rhythmic hand-crafting techniques through which they were made. The process can be helpfully understood in terms of Meyer's picture-image-picture chains - with the pictures of the foreign furnishings sitting on one pole. On the other, the intense focus on the surface-

²² Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

²³ Notwithstanding the elements of speciality production of marketing materials, The balance would clearly depend on the type of publication - with the Argos catalogue being on the more routinized end of furniture-themed publications.

²⁴ Overall, the mass marketing to speciality production relationship seen here is almost the opposite of Foster's mass production to speciality marketing.

appearance of the newly constructed furniture meant that they similarly functioned as pictures in large part. Meyer's concept is especially helpful because it focuses attention on the medium (the foreign magazine) that carries the picture and its power to inform the way it was seen and subsequently materialized in the style of the Nigerian-made furniture. In qualification, the internal structures of the furniture - in which the craftsman had more free-play - bore a stronger trace of the craft technique itself.

Section 2: Set Fabrication and Glamour

Interiors fabricated specifically for the purpose of filming emerged in around 2004 and heralded the emergence of the Glamour style. Previously, drama film and TV-making had been done in real homes and hotels. It was in 2008, with the launch of the show *Tinsel*, that the "Glamour" style really took off, quickly spreading to films as well as television.

In this new form of production, interiors were still copied from catalogues and especially foreign television shows. However, whilst the house-carpenters were *copying mediations*, these set carpenters were also *originating mediations*. The house carpentry process simply involved copying furnishings *from* pictures, but this form also involved producing furnishings *for* pictures (i.e. originating mediations). The furnishings therefore needed a quality of "filmability".

To understand the quality of filmability, I refer to the key optical relationship between set, lens and lighting and the two alternative configurations laid out in chapter 3:

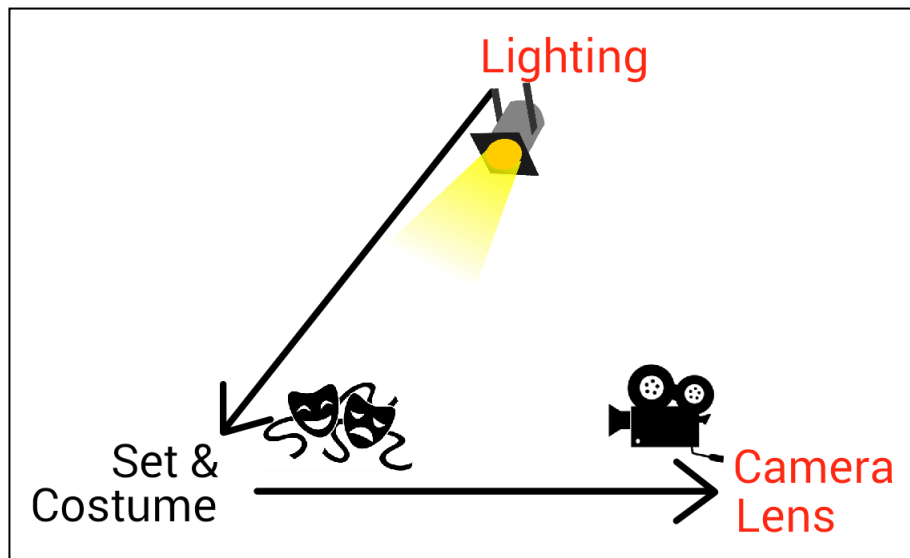


Fig. 4. Optical relationship triangle: filmic style.

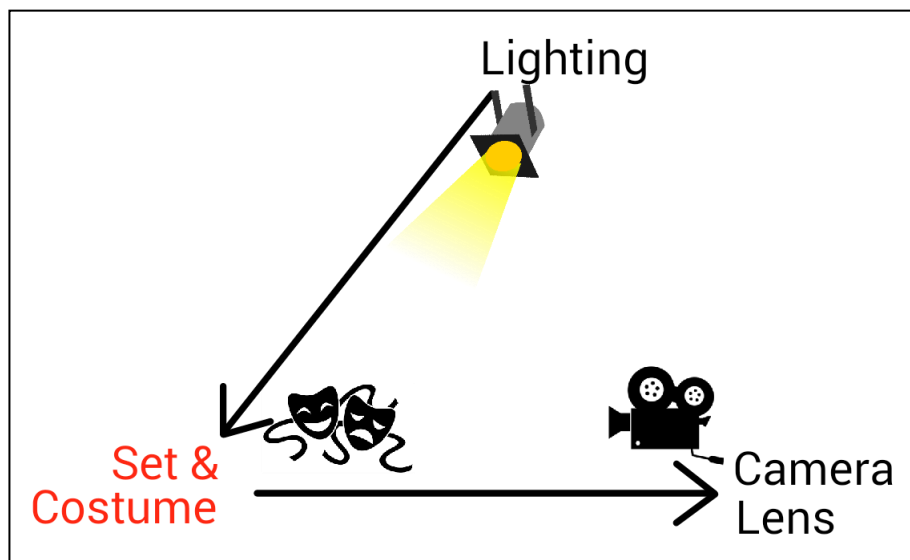


Fig. 5. Optical relationship triangle: soap-opera style.

The Glamour style had its origins in daytime drama and reality television, which tended to be more in the soap opera style. However, aspects of these were also done in a more filmic way - such as the show's live performance segments, and some of the movies in the Glamour style were more filmic.

The relationship of set with camera and lighting had five main impacts on the material nature of the set.

1) Precision effect

The first was a precision effect, with the shots having a hyper-real quality. The bright tungsten lighting would pick up every tiny flaw on the exterior of a furnishing - so the surface would have to be prepared with more care. Many carpenters picked this feature as the most demanding part of the practice of set craftsmanship. For example, Mr Bedford's painter Kemo Marshall described how far more precision was required in his painting for sets than in normal carpentry work.²⁵ Similarly, in regards to the fabric coverings, Set Designer Opejemi Daniel observed that, "there are a lot of fabrics that when you light, it give you this finesse, this shining thing, so we have to be more mentally alert and detailed."²⁶

This exactitude of finishing was a particularly feature of the soap-opera style. Set designer Leo emphasized this point in the case of the soap-opera *Tinsel* - in which the three cameras picked up imperfections from every angle and the flat lighting "accentuated everything... so that we don't get away with much." These demands became even greater with the shift to high-definition cameras, with *Tinsel*'s producers reprimanding Leo and his team, "they used to flog us, 'Ah this detail! That detail!' - you think the camera will compress it but now [with HD] it won't!"²⁷

Leo's carpenters were constantly having to touch up tiny recurring imperfections. These were caused both by the friction innate to swing-set mechanics (as each set contains double wooden walls that have to be "swung" to alternate the set) and by the harsh environmental conditions (as the humid rainy season-dusty Harmattan cycle caused hairline cracks in the plasterwork). As a result, the carpenters preferred to use the thick 'Tex Cote' textured coating and emulsions over regular paint, as these would not show up the dents and scratches and could be imperceptibly re-touched.

²⁵ Interview with painter Kemo Marshall, 23 September 2015

²⁶ Interview with art Director Arokari Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015

²⁷ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

2) Illusion effect

The second impact was the converse: an illusion effect with a tendency to use the shots to present an alternative material reality, sometimes through tricks. These illusions usually involved simulating grandiosity, a different historical period or *juju* attacks. In the new Glamour style, the former was by far the most popular.

These illusions would often be of materials. The production designer Hillary Patricks was renowned for his mastery of this illusion and used his techniques to great effect for the high-budget Africa-Magic TV series *Casino*.²⁸ His illusions included constructing smaller set-elements such as a “book cabinet”, which he made using boxes covered with printed paper and a “grand piano”, made from a “regular organ” encased in a wooden frame. For this show, he also achieved more ambitious material illusions, such as constructing three “slot machines” from wood and even a “mystic shop”, by using plants, a sign, wallpaper, and some printed graphics to give the impression of a shop-front. Surprisingly, he even fabricated simple consumer items that were widely available, including wine bottles for a bar. He fabricated the details to correspond with the degree of camera close-up used,

I used wood to create this feel [of the bottle]. It’s up to you to cut out the plywood to have this feel... another wood you run around it, then eventually you use cardboard. You then need to spray, something that will give you [the look of a liquid]. The camera will not zoom in, but you will see a feel

²⁸ Interview with art director Hillary Patricks, 8 June 2015

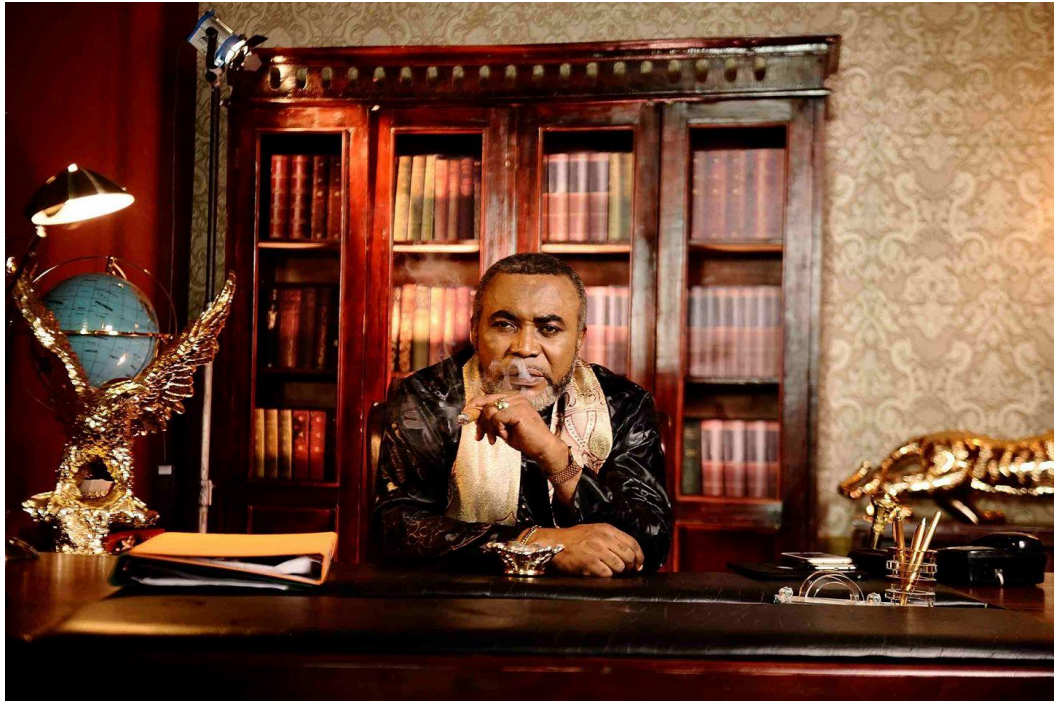


Fig 6. Hillary Patricks constructed a “book cabinet” from boxes and printed paper for Casino.

Mr Bedford and his workers were also skilled at executing such material illusions. During the filming of performances on *Project Fame*, Bedford was often called on to fabricate convincing set elements at short notice. On one occasion, the show’s director required a tree from which the singing contestant Jeff would swing with the female superstar Yemi Alade during their duet. Mr Bedford’s collaborator Byron, an expert in steel fabrication, directed the welders to hammer naturalistic-looking dents into some old steel poles (which had been used as stage scaffolding), before welding them together - creating a branch structure which appeared highly convincing when used on-stage.



Fig 7-a. Construction of a tree from steel pipes - Byron directs Kazeem and Williams Lagos, August 2015.



Fig. 7-b. Kazeem hammers dents in the metal pipes.



Fig 7-c. Metal pipes part-way through transformation into tree trunk.



Fig 7-d. Superstar Yemi Alade performing Kissing on a Tree, Lagos September 2015.



Fig. 7-e. Superstar Yemi Alade performing with Fred, Kissing on a Tree.

Like Hillary Patricks, Mr Bedford also used wallpaper extensively to simulate more expensive materials, such as brick, marble and other types of stone. His talent for carrying out these illusions was in fact responsible for inspiring some of his workers to join the company. Set worker Seun, for example, saw the *Project Fame* sets on TV and was so impressed and bamboozled by how the effects had been achieved that he sought out a job with Bedford, in a quest to discover the construction methods,

So the beauty I see in sets, whenever I watch a show...I looked at the set. I was like, "Jeez, what is this? This is very beautiful." I now look, look, look. Then I had been gaining experience at the technical school, so I now look at the show. I know that this thing, it seems as if it might be plank.

Let's now look, I mean as the show is going on, I'm not concentrating on the show, I'm concentrating on the beauty I'm seeing in the show. I now look, ok it seems as if this round stuff, this round stage, it's either wood or iron, ok - I now go for wood. How did they do this thing with wood?... And the way they do the walls of the stage, the way they use wallpaper to cover it... from the camera u won't know

its wallpaper, from the camera I thought it's something like marble. I now say, ok let me go into this. So that is what brings me to Mr Bedford.²⁹



Fig. 8-a. Wallpaper used by Mr Bedford to give an illusion of bricks - top view.



Fig. 8-b. Wallpaper used by Mr Bedford to give an illusion of bricks - top view.

²⁹ Interview with master carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun "Seun", 16 June 2017

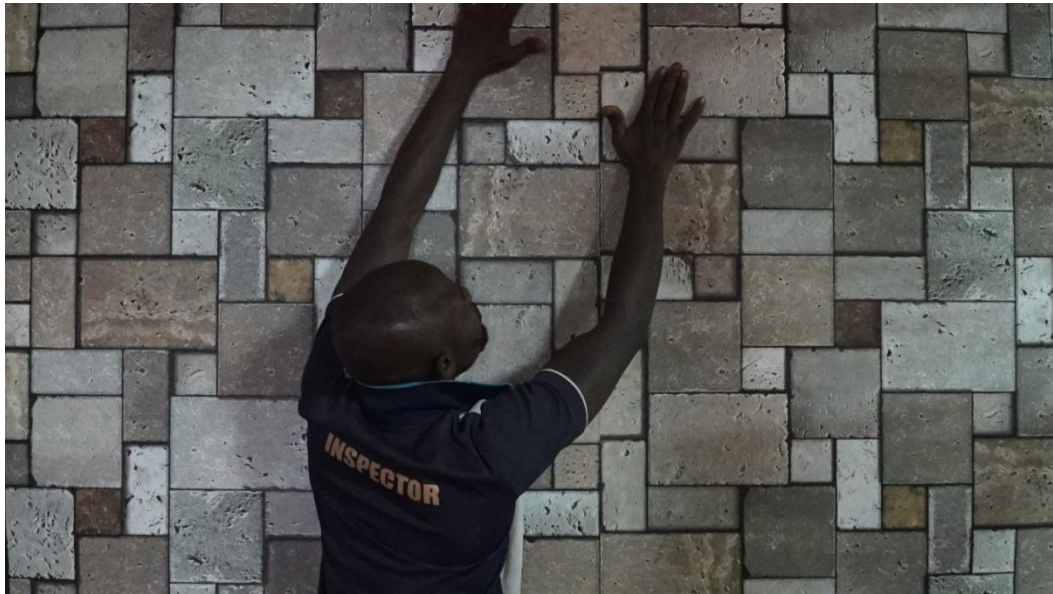


Fig. 8-c. Mr Bedford's chief carpenter Isiah "Inspector" Olayemi lays wallpaper to give illusion of tiles

The illusions could also be of spatiality, size, vast structures or impressive machines. Set designer Leo regularly attempted to create an illusion of capaciousness because his Africa Magic studio used (interchangeable) swing sets, which had a maximum size of just 18x16 feet. He described how he would use optical illusions to increase the apparent scale of a table and the space around it,

We give the illusion, like the dining table we have here should be four seater, but we'll arrange six chairs around it. And by the time the camera shoots, and using wide-angle lens - it looks and feels more spacious.³⁰

In a similar vein, Hilary Patricks simulated grandiosity on the *Casino* set by constructing colossal decorated "stone pillars" using cardboard, wood, wallpaper and velvet material. In other cases, designers would simulate apparently complex electrical contraptions. For the show *Tinsel*, Set designer Leo constructed an "electric lift" from a wooden container with a Formica-based metallic finish, which his carpenters pulled manually with ropes.

³⁰ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

Another form of illusion was that of set variety. Both locations and purpose-built studios were constantly re-used for different productions. However, it was imperative that these sets did not become recognizable to audiences, for fear that they would be ridiculed as suffering from the “star houses” syndrome (see Part 1). Production designers were therefore frequently looking for ways to disguise sets, so that audiences would not recognize them. Hillary Patricks was faced with this problem when he was put in charge of the artistic direction for two series - *Casino* and *Taste of Love* - in quick succession in the same Ibadan location. The largest room in the location had a huge window, which in *Casino* he draped with curtains - whilst in *Taste of Love* he covered with a fake wall and large picture of the fictional house owner and vases to distract attention. As a result of this careful set-dressing, there was “no way you could begin to say that it was the same place.”

3) Internal durability/external malleability

The third impact was that the set furnishings tended to combine internal durability with external malleability. They would have highly durable skeletons and would be re-covered with different soft coverings for new sets.

During the filming of the *Project Fame* Season 8 audition show, I noted the durability of the set carpentry in the wake of an on-set accident. In the interval of the show, one of the wood-framed-wall-paper-covered pillars toppled over - slapping onto the stage with a loud bang, before being quickly hoisted back into place. I was astonished by this set element’s durability, writing in my field notes, “It did not crack, there was not even a dent.”



Fig. 9. The brick-wallpaper covered wooden columns with high durability.

Set designers Mr Bedford, Hillary Patricks and Opejemi Daniel all described strategies in which they would re-use the same set elements for several productions by covering them with new upholstery or draped fabrics. The emphasis on coverings that we saw in the previous section on the “catalogue aesthetic” therefore became even more pronounced. Ewe, Mr Bedford’s upholsterer described how, unlike in household carpentry, the entirety of every chair would be upholstered. This required a very accurate construction of the skeleton and a painstaking upholstering process,

From the building of the skeleton, you have to be very accurate in your measurements, any mistake and it can’t give you the good finishing... The material comes in pieces. We clamp it together, using bolts and nuts to couple it together. We then put the foam and the cloth, you tack it, you pad it under, then after the padding... you do the finishing.³¹

³¹ Interview with upholsterer Sanusi Taiwo Rasq “Ewe”, 11 July 2015



Fig. 10. Mr Bedford's chief upholsterer Ewe poses with a sofa he has covered

To the contrary of these cases, certain furnishings created for sets were less durable than standard ones. Whereas in the cases given above, durable frames were covered by a malleable material, here the base structures were created from the malleable, non-durable material. This was particularly common when the bases lacked the potential for reuse in other productions. Art Director Hillary Patricks described building furniture to a specification “just to last long enough... they are just created for the moment”.³² Similarly, Leo gave the example of plywood being used to represent internal arches and other masonry components. Unlike houses, which were designed to be lived in for a long time, these structures were “basically just for creating an illusion” and therefore didn’t need to strictly follow building codes.³³ In a similar vein, master carpet-layer Mr Femi explained that whilst in real houses, tiles and wood floors now dominated, production designers rejected such durable materials and persisted with carpets.

³² Interviews with art director Hillary Patricks, 8 June 2015

³³ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

4) Fragments/out-of-focus set elements

We noted above that certain elements of the new shows - especially the live performance aspects - were shot in a more filmic style. Unlike in the soap-opera style, the filmic approach involved dramatic lighting and advanced camera techniques such as super-close-ups. This leads us to the fourth furnishing characteristic: that of furniture with a fragmented or unfinished quality. As these furnishings were only partially visible, often only partly constructed fragments were required.

Cinematographer/set designer Bryon described how he would direct carpenters to work only on one end of the Project Fame stage, “Don’t worry about this end, your camera will never get to this end. Worry about that end, because that is where your centre-focus is.”

Such decisions were essential for controlling costs in the filmic production style. For example, set designer Leo pointed to a case in which a film was originally estimated at N7 million naira, but “by the time you’ve spoken to the DOP, he says, look I don’t need to see all this, I’m just going to see this. It came down to N1.4 million!”³⁴

Similarly, in other cases, set-elements would be in the frame, but they would not be clearly visible, sometimes with a “soft, grainy feel” due to the focus and lighting. As a result, these elements might not be fully finished and would just need to be good enough to create a sense, “so you can see a feel...”³⁵ Properly finished furniture was therefore just a sub-set of set designer Opejemi Daniel’s set stock because his company “makes sure that only that furniture that is facing the camera has to be well finished.”³⁶

5) Colour schemes

Finally, the furnishings tended to have a characteristic colour scheme. As we have seen, the soap-opera style required bright “flat lighting”. The powerful tungsten lights used in the Nigerian shows needed to be especially bright due to the low luminescence

³⁴ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

³⁵ Interviews with Set Manager/Craftsman Gerald Uluneme 3 June 2017/9 July 2017

³⁶ Interview with art director Arokari Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015

of dark skin tones. Set designers went to great efforts to learn about the design implications of this lighting and developed new colour schemes for set furnishings in response.

In Mr Bedford's exploration process, he compared the on-screen appearance of his sets with those of black sit-coms, such as *Sandford and Sons*, videos of which he had imported from America. After viewing these, he observed,

They had a lot of black people in American comedy series and soaps. So we saw the way they lit the black and the white. And I asked myself, 'How come the colours of their sets were so well blended and different from what we were creating?' ... so I became conscious about the colours they put as the background and we started incorporating these.

Mr Bedford, Art Director Leo and other set designers therefore came to learn that they needed to adopt a colour scheme of mainly deep, saturated colours (which would appear more mid-tone on screen). Light and primary colours and white were strictly avoided - "by the time you blast light on them, it burns out!"³⁷ Leo therefore had to retrain his painters who were used to working with conventional colour schemes in houses,

We tell our painter, 'bring the colour'. When he mixes it, we are like, 'Tch! This is too light! By the time light comes on it, it is going to blow out, it's going to burn. Deepen it, deepen it!', because we know when they pour these studio lights on it, it's still going to look lighter.³⁸

Dark colours like grey and black were also suitable for flat-lighting, and were considered especially appealing when applied to the carpets and rugs, with Tinsel's Persian rugs a "rich black"³⁹. Dark colours (and plain patterns) were also favoured as they increased the reusability of the set elements for multiple productions. When these dark-coloured furnishings were moved to a different position on the set and

³⁷ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

³⁸ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

³⁹ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

placed directly in front of a different colour background, “it looks like a different set... you can’t tell”.⁴⁰

The colour and patterns of sets were also informed by their interaction with costumes. In order to maintain visual distinction between an actor and the rest of the frame, sufficient contrast is needed between costume and set colours. In filmmaking, it is possible to individually customize sets and costumes to co-ordinate with each other – as each film is a one-off creation. However, for television shows, a set could be used for hundreds of scenes (or even thousands in *Tinsel’s* case) and would therefore be used in combination with numerous different-coloured costumes. Soap-opera set designers and costumiers therefore had to work closely with each other. For example, Leo would sometimes communicate a new set-colour to the costume department so that the costumier could “tailor-guide the costumes towards what we are providing” and avoid using similar colours, or at least “break them with a jacket or camisole...” However, in general, it was far more practical to provide the visual variety through colourful costumes whilst keeping the sets in a neutral colour. The drive to change costumes (to signal new characters or evolution of existing characters) tended to run at a faster rate than that to set changes, so it was usually “easier to play with the costumes, and leave the set as universal [i.e. neutral] as possible”.⁴¹

Implications for materiality of sets: soft and shiny materials

The main implication of these five features for the materiality of sets was in the use of soft and shiny materials. The soft materials included fabrics, which covered sofas and other types of furnishings. These allowed for maximum interchangeability of skeletons and coverings and the fabrics’ luminescent textures were especially effective under the bright “flat lighting”, conveying a “finesse... that can come out wonderfully well.”⁴² Curtains were favoured over blinds, and shaggy Persian rugs and throw pillows were also popular. Carpet material was used as a multi-purpose covering for a wide range of

⁴⁰ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

⁴¹ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

⁴² Interview with art director Arokari Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015

set-elements. The combination of these materials produced a subtly distinct style: of a colourful, textured, softness, which I described in my field notes after visiting the Tinsel set:

The curtains, there is some distinctiveness there... I think it is definitely in the fabrics, rugs, upholstery, the curtains...

Whilst the fabrics affixed to furnishings (i.e. the upholstery and coverings) were in neutral flat colours, the patterns tended to “move to the rugs and the pillows”. Set designer Leo described the Persian rugs as creating a particularly strong impact, “Ah, tch, ya, what’s this?... Wow!”⁴³ These elements were the most interchangeable so could be more elaborate in their design.

Mr Femi Akinuga had been in the rug and carpet business since 1977 and described how the film and television industries had in fact been essential in reviving his business. His company, Lufthan Nigeria, supplied both domestic houses and Mr Bedford’s set company. The residential-house demand for carpets had completely dried up by the mid-2000s, with house-owners preferring tiles, wood-laminate and marble flooring. However, the TV industry “saw the beauties of rugs and made a demand for them. They placed it in different position to make the set more beautiful...” Mr Femi supplied and laid large quantities of carpet material for Mr Bedford, for a variety of purposes including decorative rugs and carpets, as well as coverings for set-elements.⁴⁴

⁴³ Interview with art director Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani, 10 February 2016

⁴⁴ For example, the steel risers (small steps) used for the singing segments were re-covered for each show so that they would appear fresh each time.



Fig. 11. Mr Bedford's carpet supplier/layer Femi Akinuga laying a carpet on the Project Fame set.

Mr Bedford displayed an uncharacteristic level of respect to workers specialized in fabrics. As a polymath with an uncanny mastery across materials (including wood, steel, aluminium, polyester and fibreglass), he tended to behave imperiously towards the craftsmen. In the area of fabrics, however, he showed an unusual level of humility - appearing to find a certain mysteriousness about them - and was willing to defer decisions to skilled practitioners. For example, he was respectful of his experienced carpet man Mr Femi - especially praising him for his skill in delicately rendering the carpet cuffs. Moreover, Bedford reserved his greatest esteem for his curtain-draping specialist. During the preparation of the studio for the *Magic of the Musicals* show, Mr Bedford was involved in an argument with this man regarding the hanging of the curtains. He instructed the man not to put folds in the draped curtains but to hang them straight, as they were made from an expensive velvet and the folds were unnecessary. The man stubbornly asserted that this was impossible - offering to

increase the width of the folds and insisting on a comparison of the two methods. In my field notes, I described the conclusion of this interaction,

We looked at them side-by-side and Bedford agreed that it was much better [folded]. On this occasion Bedford was wrong. He was very admiring of that man, saying that when someone masters this craft, he can do anything, that he has total respect for that man.

Whereas this might seem banal, it was in fact rather shocking to those present - it was uncharacteristic of Bedford and the only occasion in which I saw him acknowledge fallibility.



Fig. 12-a. Mr Bedford's curtain-draping specialist.



Fig. 12-b. Curtains draped by Mr Bedford's curtain-draping specialist.



Fig. 12-c. Fabrics creating a lighting effect on the set of Magic of the Musicals.

Perspex and other plastics were another type of soft material characteristic of set furnishings. Perspex was favoured for its translucent and malleable properties and was essential for the construction of a key element of set furnishing: the light boxes. These perspex boxes contained lights and were one of the basic building blocks in creating the set's feel. They were built either from coloured perspex, or more usually, were affixed with coloured plastic frosting or with SAV-cote film.



Fig. 13-a. Mr Bedford's carpenters Ebuka and Gerald building a light box

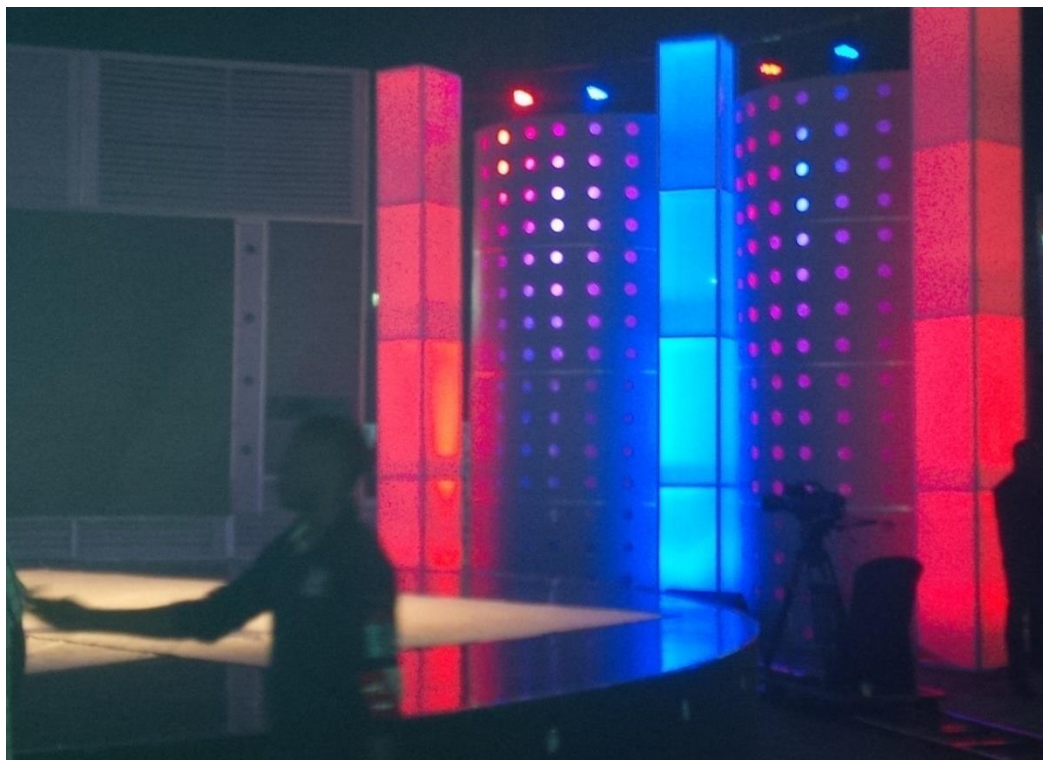


Fig. 13-b. Light boxes on the set of Dance with Peter.

Perspex was also commonly used as a panel “window” with back-spot-lighting, sometimes affixed with coloured plastic transfers, patterns or logos to produce spectacular lighting effects. For example, the windows for the *TasteQuest* cooking-show were affixed with chicken, fish and shrimp-shaped transfers, whilst changing-coloured light streamed through.



Fig. 14. Perspex windows affixed with transfers and illuminated on Tastequest set.

The second category was that of shiny materials with lustrous coatings and surfaces. I came to appreciate the importance of these materials during the last week of set-building for *Project Fame*. By this time the structural carpentry work had all been completed and the focus shifted to finishing - including sandpapering, coating, smoothing, dusting and buffing. It was during this period that the set's look dramatically transformed. Throughout most of the three-month period spent on construction, its external appearance had changed slowly, and it had always retained the same surface texture of raw wood, sawdust, and bare steel. However, in the last week, it felt like it suddenly came into flower, with the final coatings giving it a gleaming, vivid look.



Fig. 15. Sheen on newly completed Project Fame stage.

The stage, for example, was laid with a special “Harlequin Hi-Shine floor”, a sophisticated vinyl-composite imported from the UK⁴⁵. It had been designed in collaboration with lighting designers and dancers and - despite its carpet-like texture - produced an appearance of a hard, shiny stage. It would be glued onto the wooden stage and carefully dusted before the polishing could commence. Harlequin supplied an acrylic emulsion to dress the surface, but Mr Bedford rejected this, having discovered that vigorously polishing it with diesel produced the very best shine.

My awe at this new finished appearance was shared by the set workers, who also wondered at the intense sheen produced by the Harlequin floor. In fact, the finishing seemed to have been a common factor inspiring them to move from ordinary carpentry into set production. Carpenter Seun, for example, had been enchanted by these visual effects,

⁴⁵ manufactured by a company based in Tunbridge Wells in Kent

The way they finish the set with spraying, [I would say] "Wow this is very beautiful! I wish that I can know much about this. I wish I can do such a thing..." ... That Harlequin floor is in reality is just like a carpet, but when I was watching it on TV, I would never believe that this is how it is. So I would look up, look, look and look at it. Wow, this is very beautiful, this is amazing!⁴⁶



Fig. 16-a. Harlequin Hi-Sheen floor before shining on Project Fame set.



Fig. 16-b. Harlequin Hi-Sheen floor during shining with diesel on Project Fame set.

⁴⁶ Interview with master carpenter Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun "Seun", 16 June 2017



Fig. 16-c. Harlequin Hi-Sheen floor fully shined and ready for Project Fame opening show.

The desire for sheen also resulted in the use of hard, reflective materials, especially aluminium - as well as bronze and chrome steel on occasion.⁴⁷ Both Mr Bedford and Hillary Patricks favoured Aluminium when fabricating window and other frame structures, and aluminium metallic “chroma tape” for covering the edges of the stage and some set elements. In Patricks’ eyes, aluminium “... is a feel, it’s grand, it’s classy, it adds sheen!”⁴⁸

The use of glass often went alongside aluminium, partly because aluminium specialists tended to have a background in fitting windows. Glass added to the sheen and was considered to be especially wondrous when used as flooring. Set Designer/Cameraman Byron Ene took great pride that the central pit in his *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* set was made from glass because it greatly improved the look of the light and Hillary Patricks was similarly proud that “I have done some sets when the floor is actually glass, glass!” In one of the most striking sets I came across, Set Designer Pat Nebo created a glass walkway - suspended above a swimming pool - for models to walk over in the “Costuming for Film” Fashion show.

⁴⁷ Interview with art director Bedford Baloebi, 10 June 2015

⁴⁸ See Interview with art director Hillary Patricks, 8 June 2015



Fig. 17-a. Glass central void on Who Wants to be a Millionaire? set.



Fig. 17-b. Glass-floored judges' area on set of Dance with Peter.



Fig. 17-c. Glass walkway - suspended above a swimming pool on Costuming for Film Fashion show.

Craftsmen extending practice into the new materials

The shift to the use of new soft materials entailed a degree of cultural improvisation: craftsmen who had learnt techniques in more traditional materials extended their practice into new ones.

The ambiance in the workshops of carpenters working for set designers reflected the soft material dominance. Whilst the carpenters' technical and apprenticeship education was based on mastering wood, their work-places became dominated by fabrics, upholstery and sewing machines. I first noticed this phenomenon in the workshop of carpenter Hakeem, who supplied furnishings to set designer Opejemi Daniel. Similarly, in Mr Bedford's workshop, carpenters who were ostensibly wood-workers, such as Bale and Shei, extended their practice into fabric cutting and covering work; and Mr Charles, an experienced electrician, would stitch together large quantities of black velvet sheeting (used for set-masking) with the sewing machine. Some of these carpenters seemed to discover a stronger connection with the soft

materials than with the wood and metal with which they were familiar, a theme that will be explored in more detail below.



Fig 18-a. Carpenter Hakeem's workshop dominated by fabrics.



Fig. 18-b. Carpenter Hakeem with fabric samples for upholstery



Fig. 18-c. Carpenters Shei and Bale covering a set element with fabric

Two of the craftsmen displayed a particularly impressive ability to extend their craft skills into the new soft and shiny materials. Tosin Lesami was a specialist in aluminium and glass-working, having had a four-year apprenticeship with the window company Jegensen Aluminium. As part of his glass working, he had learnt to cut and engrave with sharp cutting tools, a skill that he used on occasion for engraving windows on the *Project Fame* set.



Fig. 19. Aluminium and glass specialist Tosin with a window he had engraved.

Crucially, Mr Bedford realized that Tosin's fine cutting skills could be applied to softer materials, including Perspex and the thin coloured plastic-coated transfers for the

lights to shine through. During the construction of the *Tastequest* set, Bedford allowed only Tosin - alongside himself - to do the very intricate, painstaking cutting and sticking of the food-themed transfers. I was initially surprised to see Tosin doing this work as he was not a general carpenter and had a somewhat special status on-set, recognized by the name, “Aluminium Tosin”. However, I soon saw why he had agreed to do this. Tosin was a natural at cutting out the paper creatures’ complex outlines, carrying out the task with a quiet stillness and focus that was quite different to the more muscular approach needed to do regular carpentry tasks. The scale of this handwork was also at a far smaller order of magnitude than regular carpentry - striking me as almost akin to seamstressing - with any imperfection outlined due to the backlighting effectively acting like a projector.



Fig. 20-a. Mr Bedford and “Aluminium” Tosin cutting out animal-themed transfers on Tastequest set.



Fig. 20-b. Mr Bedford using fine cutting skills to make stencil



Fig. 20-c. "Aluminium" Tosin tracing around stencils for light projection



Fig. 20-d. Mr Bedford and "Aluminium" Tosin laying transfers on Perspex.



Fig. 20-e. Finished patterns for Tastequest light projection.

Ebuka Uzoma, an early recruit of Mr Bedford, also made a transition from hard to soft materials. Before joining Bedford, Ebuka had completed a remedial course in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the Federal University of Agriculture at Makurdi, and was originally employed by Bedford as an electrician. During his time with the company, Ebuka flourished into its most creative soft materials' specialist. Although he joined as

an electrician, he had a disparate range of interests that seemed to converge in the manipulation of soft materials on set. I first became aware of his virtuosity when he helped to craft a promotional CD stand using Self-Adhesive Vinyl (SAV), Perspex and some metallic picture-frame pieces. On that occasion, he manipulated a single razor blade with the delicacy of a barber to intricately score around the vinyl, before twice transforming the picture frame pieces into an I-Pad holder with a scraper, gold spray paint and blue SAV.

Ebuka's greatest achievement at F4D was his contribution to an improvement in the company's capability in affixing frosting, vinyl and SAV stickers to perspex and glass. He already had a head-start in this technique as he had previously worked in pasting posters in Lagos, sticking up to four posters per minute with starch. He was always looking for ways to improve the affixing process.

Whilst most of the employees would simply stick the adhesive by lining it up with the surface and then smoothing over, Mr Bedford had attempted to improve this by bringing in a specialist to demonstrate a better application method. The new method involved covering the surface with soapy water, then laying the sheeting on top, allowing the gum to weaken. One worker would pull the sheeting tight, whilst a second would be smoothing over and pushing the soapy water out from underneath using curtain fabric or other soft material. This made the gum more slippery, and allowed for the sheeting to be shifted around and smoothed flat without any bubbles.

Ebuka was one of the few workers who took on the new idea. However, he still felt that it had not been fully optimized and continued on a quest to find the perfect technique. One day, he got inspiration whilst passing by a man on the street who was laying a different type of material. In Ebuka's new method, he would scrub the sticky side of the frosting/vinyl/SAV with the soapy water (thereby rubbing off some of the gum) and also apply soapy water to the receiver surface. This combination of gum and soapy water acted like a "repositional" adhesive as it could be easily slid around into the perfect position, with even fewer bubbles and air pockets, and required just one person. Although this may seem banal to a layman, it was quite revolutionary in the company. Ebuka was very enthusiastic in converting his colleagues to the new method,

Now, the other workers' frosting was still having bumps and they were actually spending more time, and I say "Why not do it this way?" ... I showed them [the new technique]. Some found it interesting, some did not. Those that found it interesting was doing it that way and it was faster, because all you need is just, turn the frost, wash off the gum with soap, and then stick it, push out all the soaps and the bubbles, and then it will lay perfect, oh!⁴⁹

Whilst some of Ebuka's colleagues took the idea on, others refused because they had a fear that if not accurately manipulated, the water could damage the sheeting, and also because they saw themselves as formally trained, unlike Ebuka.

Ebuka was very proud of the new process, and kept an example of a particularly successful SAV-covered board at home as a memento. It was part of a larger installation for the 2015 Valentine's Day show *Adam and Eve*. This perfectly flat red rectangle had even impressed Ultima's Byron Ene - a notorious perfectionist - who "couldn't believe it!" I was similarly impressed with the achievement, commenting in my field notes,

"It was like it was industrially made - there were no bubbles; it almost looked like it was painted. It was so flat."⁵⁰



Fig. 21. A perfect SAV-covered board Ebuka made for Adam and Eve.

⁴⁹ Interview with set designer Uzoma Mike Ebuka, 4 June 2017

⁵⁰ Interview with production manager Byron Ene, 25 July 2015

Ebuka had performed the procedure many thousands of times and he could do it almost from muscle memory. When I asked him about it one Sunday at his flat - quick as a flash - he whipped out some sheeting and proceeded to cover his marble-effect table in just a few minutes, finishing it by scoring the sheet's edges and delicately bending it around the edges of the table. In just a few minutes he had transformed a glass table into what appeared to be a perfect oval piece of wood laminate!



Fig. 22-a. Ebuka demonstrating his carefully refined vinyl-laying technique. Stage 1: laying soapy water on both the vinyl and the receiver surface (a marble-effect coffee table).



Fig. 22-b. Ebuka demonstrating his carefully refined vinyl-laying technique. Completed covering: the marble-effect coffee table transformed into perfect oval piece of wood laminate.

When I last saw Ebuka, in June 2017, he was beginning to do some jobs as an independent set man for low-budget - but critically acclaimed - film productions. He was perhaps the first example of Mr Bedford spawning a new generation of set men, who had served nearly their whole careers in the set industry. It is yet to be seen whether this new generation will create a new style radically different to *Glamour*, although Ebuka did seem to have an inclination towards a grittier aesthetic and had become highly skilled at making new materials appear aged and worn. Ebuka had served as the prop man for the acclaimed short movie *Ojuju*, before becoming the chief set designer for the features *O-Town*, *After Dark*, *Tatu*, and the award-winning *Ojukokora*.⁵¹

Conclusions on Set-fabrication and Glamour

The fabrication of set furnishings for filmability constituted a craft displacement that involved custom production on the one hand (the fabrication of the furnishings) and a custom-batch hybrid (the filming process) on the other. This is in accordance with the discussion of the generic optical-relationship triangles discussed in the opening section.

As in the Razzmatazz case, filmability bears a similarity to Ingold's "cultural improvisation", but in a slightly oblique way. In accordance with "cultural improvisation", the fabricated sets join together past, present and future in that they bear a trace of their making process (from the catalogue pictures) and leave a trace on the things that they go on to make (in the frame of the films). In Ingold's words, they are part of a "never-ending story whose telling is shaped by previous relations and goes on to shape subsequent ones."⁵²

However, contra-Ingold, the set furnishings operate in a "*backwards*" as well as "*forwards*" direction. They are not simply *made* objects but are also "*will make*" objects that are made, or designed, in anticipation of the next stage of production.

⁵¹ Interview with set designer Uzoma Mike Ebuka, 4 June 2017

⁵² Tim Ingold, "Introduction," in *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*, ed. Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 45–54 on p. 50

They are patterns and moulds as their contours do not purely reflect their making processes but also reflect the shape of the things they will form.

Whilst Ingold's "cultural improvisation" draws strongly on Gell's enchantment essay, my observations mirror more closely Gell's later work, "Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks", in which he inverts his earlier argument on "made" objects.⁵³ Reflecting on the shapes of fish and animal traps, Gell came to the conclusion that "all implements are models of their users because they have to be adapted to their characteristics". In *Art and Agency* he extended this argument from implements to all made objects, which - even if they do not mirror the physiognomy of their users as they do with traps - will always bear some form of the trace of their "recipient".

In order to make a full reflection on filmability, however, it is necessary to combine these insights with Meyer's "aesthetic formations" concept. As in Gell's concept of a pattern or mould, the set leaves a physical imprint on the camera sensor. This imprint is "immediate" - contra-Meyer - as it is fully determined by the set's (and sensor's) material properties and is not mediated through an imaginary. However, *in accordance* with Meyer, this physical imprint is optical rather than tactile. Moreover, it is optical in a special way that goes beyond ordinary human powers of vision.

The "aesthetic formations" approach to materiality in relation to an "optical unconscious" is therefore crucial to this account. "Filmability" is helpfully explained in these terms, as its characteristics are determined by the camera's ability to see aspects of materials that are not immediately visible to the human eye. Even Benjamin's original description of the aesthetic produced by the optical unconscious - "new structures of matter, image worlds... and movements with a curious gliding, floating character of their own" - resonates with the "filmability/Glamour" style.

⁵³ Alfred Gell, "Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps," *Journal of Material Culture* 1, no. 1 (1996): 15–38.

Section 3: Subsequent Developments in Filmability

1. The instability of filmability

Although I have argued that “filmability” involved the development of set furnishings made out of soft and shiny materials that were defined by their surface textures, this “aesthetic formation” has proved unstable. The well-dried woods, fabrics, diesel and other oils used for shining, as well as the sound-proofing materials (including foam, POP carpets and coal-tarred roofing) are all highly combustible. Filmability soon revealed itself as flammability.

Since 2010, many of the new studios have been blighted - and as I shall argue, rejuvenated - by fires. Ultima Studios (where *Project Fame* was filmed) was gutted by a catastrophic fire in August 2010, and this has been followed by numerous others - including MNET studios (where *Tinsel* was filmed) in March 2013 and Dream Studios in Omole as recently as August 2018.

Total Metal Collapsible

The first fire engulfed Ultima Studios, where Byron Ene is the Director of Photography. Originally a cameraman, he has expanded into a wide-ranging role and acts as the general manager on the studio floor. Roundly respected in the industry, he is a polymath: famous for being the first man in West Africa to master the Steadicam, he worked on several classic Nollywood movies under Amaka Igwe. Moving on to Ultima, he has overseen the success of two of Nigeria’s biggest television shows: *Who Wants to be a Millionaire? Nigeria* and *Project Fame West Africa*.

Out of his many achievements, Byron’s greatest pride is reserved for his “total metal collapsible” set for *Who Wants to be a Millionaire? Nigeria*, which he fabricated in his own workshop. It was at this workshop that he seemed to be most at home, surrounded by his welders and panel beaters, where they would experiment with the scrap metal, as he described, “I have my local welders and we love grinding metals, that sound, I love hearing that whole noise”.

The origins of the set lay in the fire of August 2010. Byron reflected on his motivations in the aftermath of the fire,

Equipment heading towards a billion naira, destroyed! I was mad. How can one have a studio like this, and fire comes and takes over everything?... We can't lose everything we have because of one electrical spark.⁵⁴

Byron attempted to persuade Femi Ayeni, Ultima Studios Managing Director, that replacing the old wooden set design with a collapsible steel version would spare a significant portion of the capital in the event of another blaze. After impressing Mr Ayeni with a miniature prototype that he made in his workshop, the MD agreed to proceed with the project.

Mr Ayeni assigned John Johnson to act as Byron's consultant. Johnson was a veteran set designer in Nollywood and was responsible for creating the first Lagos Millionaire set. He had gone to London to study the original London design to ensure that the first Lagos set conformed closely to it. Byron employed his own team of welders and brought in several other skilled technicians and advisers. These included final-year students in mechanical, electrical and a civil engineering from Yaba College of Technology. They also included a panel beater (from the auto-industry) to perfect the finishing and a plumber who contributed to the precise cutting of the pipes. Byron spent two and half months sleeping on the cement floor of the workshop to ensure that the set was successfully completed in time for the new season of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire? Nigeria*

The finished set had two main functional advantages over the wooden construction. The first was that due to being constructed from steel, it was fire-proof, durable and reusable. Whilst the wood had not been easily repairable, the new steel structure was more robust and any damage could simply be welded. As Byron had succeeded in galvanizing the steel, it was possible to store the set outside when it was not in use. This was a huge advantage as the studio was still relatively small with no space for storing sets. In the past, the wooden set had rotted in-between shows, and had to be constructed anew each year.

⁵⁴ Interview with production manager Byron Ene, 25 July 2015

The second advantage was that due to its collapsibility, the new set was moveable. Following the fire, this function was a necessity as shooting had to continue without a permanent studio. The shooting of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* and *Project Fame* was taking place between a number of smaller studios, where Ultima rented space.

The moveability of the other steel sets Byron built (following the success of the *Millionaire* set) was a very popular feature, as most production companies are independent from the studios and rent space in different locations. Byron illustrated the predicament with reference to a lady who made a Christmas special TV show once a year. He tried to persuade her to pay him more to make her set as a metal collapsible, but she refused due to the cost; one year later she called him to enquire about reusing the wooden set,

a new year, and voila! She called me again, 'So what about the at old one?'. I say, 'It's dead! All the wood is rotten! Then she remembered what I had told her. I just said, 'more cash! Not just more cash! Better cash!

Following the success of the new set, Byron was able to create numerous similar sets for other production companies as a freelancer. Although the majority of studio sets are still constructed in wood, he has played a huge role in a new trend towards steel. Moreover, Ultima Studios itself has switched the live-show part of *Project Fame West Africa* (its other big show) to metal.

Analysis of Total Metal Collapsables

The Ultima Studios fire created two imperatives. The first was to make a new set that from a visual perspective was a close copy of the original. This was reflected by Mr Ayeni's insistence that John Johnson (the creator of the first Lagos Millionaire set) was present to advise Byron. It was a complex task as there were actually two originals: the set in London that informed the Lagos design, and the one in Lagos that had been destroyed. From the point of view of the director of *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire? Nigeria*, the aim was to get the set looking as close to the first Lagos set as possible, so as not to cause discontinuity. The fire was a constructive actor: it instantly created a new original (the old set), to which great effort was taken to match.

However, coming from the side of the British production company, Byron was also being pushed in a different direction: the company was insisting that the fire was an opportunity to make the new Lagos set even closer in appearance to the original London one. Byron recalled the letter received by Mr Ayeni,

They sent a letter to us when they heard we were building a new set. They said we must get the centre pit right this time! The first one that got burnt in the fire, they said the circular pit at the centre didn't have [as much] depth as the original [London set]⁵⁵

Byron decided to take up the challenge from the London office. He managed to increase the depth of the pit from under 1ft to over 3ft, and installed small moving-head LED lights (instead of fixed ones) to get it even closer to the original. Having achieved a “perfect match”, he decided that there was actually some room for improvement in the original London design! He therefore added a second walkway to the set, and also put the overhead circulating lights on a complete ring so that there wouldn't be any gaps in the illuminated area.

This practice initially seems to recall that of the “catalogue aesthetic”, in which the artisans attempted to construct the furniture so it matched the “original” catalogue pictures “exactly!” However, the total-metal-collapsible experience goes well beyond this. As a result of the fire, the London set was now no longer the only original, as the first Lagos set had now become the most immediate “original”. Whilst the London set continued to be the touchstone, both originals in fact had an impact on the design of the new set. This recalls Ingold's view that each “work comprises the accumulating trail of its performances – each one copying a copy of a copy – every performance becomes part of the ever-evolving work.”⁵⁶ In addition, it is notable that Byron wanted to go even further than making the set an “exact” match - he wanted to make it enhance characteristics associated with “filmability” by making the lighting moveable and improving the glass-coloured pit. These alterations reflect how “filmability” had gone beyond adapting sets to be visible on camera, rather it had become a “glamour”

⁵⁵ Interview with production manager Byron Ene, 25 July 2015

⁵⁶ Ingold, “Introduction,” 51.

aesthetic that set workers would constantly try to enhance to produce a pleasurable sensation.

The second imperative created by the fire was to increase the durability and versatility of the set to provide relief from the onerous task of constant replication. The specific challenge posed by the fire was to create a set that would be fire-proof. Certainly the fire was the catalyst, but the set owners were keen to make their sets more durable in the face of environmental conditions in general: whether from fire, rain and humidity, general knocks, or even the need to move the sets between studios. All of these tasks demanded the constant replication of the wooden sets - in most cases the set would have to be re-constructed for every season of the show. Not seeing this need for constant replication as an improvisatory performance, they actually found it very frustrating and even immoral - indeed there was an ethics of re-use attached to the drive towards metal sets. The immorality of waste on set was emphasized by several set men, including Byron and Leo Spartani of Tinsel.

The practices associated with the second imperative constitute a tweak to the “filmability aesthetic”. In the discussion of characteristic features of “filmability”, I argued that there was a tendency towards internal durability and external malleability, with some sets also having non-durable internal structures. The total-metal collapsable’s galvanized steel structure represents a great increase in durability, and to some extent malleability - in the sense that it could be foldable and transportable. In addition, the rise of steel sets seems to indicate a move away from the primacy of soft materials. This appears to reflect the loss of a distinction between the internal and external, with the shiny steel making up both skeleton and the surface of the set.

2. Filmability off-camera

Another interesting development of the ‘filmability’ phenomenon has been the *off-camera* reproduction of the aesthetic. Two distinct examples of the practice will be considered here: the adoption of “filmability” as a style for non-filmed home furnishings and the mirroring of “filmability” in carpenters’ fashion styles.

Filmability of non-filmed home furnishings

In some cases, furnishings that had been created for the film/TV set had an afterlife as they would be disseminated, usually for use as home furnishings. Some artist set-men chose to keep a store of props and furnishings in their houses and lease them out. Mr Bedford engaged in such a leasing business, and there was a high demand for the service, with some of his furnishings having been leased five or six times. In a similar vein, Hakeem, a freelance carpenter, would make furniture for sets and then buy it back afterwards, refurbish it (e.g. reupholstering) and then sell it to a customer for home-use. Another common practice was for the crew on a show to bid for the set and props (so they could use it in their own homes) once the show had finished.

In other cases, the aesthetic was reproduced through renewed fabrication. The mode of copying from sets into the home furnishings varied. Sometimes third parties who saw the sets on-screen would independently reproduce them as domestic interiors. This was a very common occurrence: Mr Bedford, for example, noticed that the furniture he created for Project Fame would become the popular style for the following year's interiors.

Alternatively, the original set company might diversify into the new areas. For example, the set-man Opejemi Daniel described how "as a set-man, I now have the flare for colours, the eye for colours and qualities, and how to place things.... I do the same for sets, homes, boutiques, for a small hotel."⁵⁷ Similarly, Hillary Patricks described how he used his set aesthetic to use motor parts, frosted glass and a chrome fill to create a receptionist's desk for a friend.⁵⁸ In other cases, it seemed more like the set men were being pulled into the home furnishing work by market demand, with third-parties who had seen their creations on screen contacting the original set men and asking them to produce the new interiors. Set man Sean Israel described this experience,

I get calls every day because of the movie - people call me they want a decoration like this, like that, and from that contacts to contacts keep spreading... [In one

⁵⁷ Interview with art director Arokari Opejemi Daniel, 9 June 2015

⁵⁸ Interview with art director Hillary Patricks, 8 June 2015

movie] I created a newly opened shop - called Caroline Shoes, I had a printed banner. I put my phone number there on the banner, so at the end of the day I got a call, every day, recently, I keep getting calls, they see the number on the banner - they want me to build that shop.⁵⁹

Filmability and set workers' style

In the second case, as the set developed from a blank canvas to a dust-and-rubble-strewn construction site and then to the ultra-shiny polished studio-set, the set workers changed their dress in apparent reflection of the evolving surroundings, taking on the quality of "filmability" themselves. Whilst the shorts and t-shirts worn at the early stages could be reduced to a simple functionality, the exquisite dressing-up in the latter stages appeared to interfere with the boys' ability to carry out basic tasks. Although the set was tidier at the later stages, the workers still had to do finishing with messy fluids such as polish, lacquer and paint, and dynamic tasks like lifting big set-elements. The flowing, white- and pastel-coloured agbadas, "senators suits", sunglasses and bulky watches seemed like inconveniences that could easily be damaged.

To some extent, this could be understood in terms of "complying with your environment".⁶⁰ Gerrard used this formulation to assert the moral imperative to package oneself⁶¹ in a way befitting one's surroundings. In this regard, an aphorism that came up with great frequency was, "the way that you dress is the way you will be addressed".⁶² However, there was also a more intriguing dynamic at play. The workers

⁵⁹ Interview with set designer Sean Israel, 23 December 2015

⁶⁰ Interviews with set manager/craftsman Gerald Uluneme, 3 June 2017/9 July 2017

⁶¹ See Chapter 5, Part 2 for a discussion of the concept of "packaging"

⁶² An interesting example of such an approach came up in discussions over the ways carpenters should comport themselves in a professional context. Great emphasis was put on carrying the tools in a box rather than a sack-bag, to having the tape-rule affixed to the belt rather than just holding it, and to wearing neat and clean clothes. This can be understood as something akin to John Illiffe's concept of "respectability". Illiffe sees respectability as an evolution (in the early-to-mid 20th Century) of an earlier concept of "householder honour". In this notion, a "westernized lifestyle" and clerkly or teaching occupations were valued⁶²; and respectable people required certain material objects, notably owned-houses, clothes and cars to fit in with these.

seemed to have internalized the cycle of constructing something from scratch to eventually create the shiny, finished form of the “filmability” style (before dismantling it again). For Gerrard, his clothing was going through a correlate process:

Towards the end of the job, the set is looking cleaner, the lights are coming up, the set is neated, finishes are coming up, so what you do is you follow the same approach.⁶³

Analysis of off-camera filmability

The move of filmability *off-camera* can be helpfully analyzed through Meyer’s concept of picture-image-picture chains, with the case paralleling that of the “catalogue aesthetic.” In both instances, an aesthetic designed for a particular medium was emulated in a context outside of that medium, and the emulation process itself was influenced by the materiality of the medium. Filmability off-camera included two cases. The first was the creation of furniture in the filmability style for home use and the second was the adoption of a style of dress in the filmability aesthetic by behind-the-scenes set workers. In terms of Meyer’s chains, the development completes a circle through which a distinctive Nigerian furnishing style has begun to emerge: from foreign furniture, to imported catalogue pictures, to local furniture (in the “catalogue aesthetic”), to set-furnishings (in the “filmability aesthetic”), and ending with the local furniture (in the “filmability aesthetic”).⁶⁵

⁶³ Interviews with set manager/craftsman Gerald Uluneme ,3 June 2017/9 July 2017

⁶⁵ This also has similarities with Benjamin’s discussion of the “optical unconscious.” In this approach the aesthetic that originated in film and photography had an impact on the style of fabricated consumer products ⁶⁵, together forming networks that he termed “phantasmagoria.” Margaret Cohen, “Walter Benjamin’s Phantasmagoria,” *New German Critique*, no. 48 (1989): 87–10

Section 4: Promotional Installations

In chapter five, I pointed to Scranton's argument that the *speciality-producer* goods format had been crucial in tooling for the *mass-production* format. I then proposed a parallel argument: that the speciality-consumer goods format could have a similarly key role in the *marketing* for the *mass-production* format. Here I explore whether this is a helpful way of thinking about the relationship between the Nigerian speciality-consumer segment and an expanding Nigerian mass-production industry. In this argument, furniture carpentry and film-set fabrication combined with a third speciality-consumer industry - event staging - to form a craftsmanship of promotion. This coalesced with the needs of a growing Fast-Moving-Consumer-Goods sector in a period of industrial restructuring.

Previously, I outlined some developments in the industrial landscape from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s that had a great impact on the *dissemination* of foreign goods and media in the country. I continue that narrative by considering the industrial changes that occurred later on in the 1980s - and the types of promotional activities that expanded as a result.

Fast-Moving-Consumer Goods (FMCG) Industries

In July 1986, Nigeria began to implement her Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). There was a major devaluation of the naira and the import licensing system, which had previously been used to conserve the scarce foreign-exchange resources was scrapped and replaced by the Second-Tier Foreign Exchange Market. Whilst the removal of the import-licensing system alleviated the foreign exchange shortage to some extent, the falling naira caused significant increases in the cost of imports. The latter hit Nigerian manufacturing hard as there was still a high dependence on foreign manufacturing inputs. As a result, Nigeria's diverse base of manufacturing industries was reduced in this period. Industries that were adversely affected included the electrical-assembly industries, flour milling and the building-material industry⁶⁶.

Industries that were less dependent on foreign inputs - such as rubber processing, cotton ginning and vegetable-oil processing⁶⁷ - tended to be more successful following the SAP. One sector that fared particularly well was the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Industry, including the food, beverages, tobacco and toiletries sectors. This was partly due to the fact that the sector had responded well to the earlier import-substitution policies of 1982-5, which

⁶⁶ Tom Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 244.

⁶⁷ Forrest, *The Advance of African Capital*, 44

had encouraged the use of local raw materials and production inputs. It had the highest local-input utilization in the entire manufacturing sector in 1987 (at 51%) and continued to increase, reaching 63% by 1989. The sector was therefore able to avoid the worst effects of the rapidly worsening exchange rates, and also to benefit from the rising cost of competitor imported products.⁶⁸

FMCG industries were able to take advantage of several other benefits, including the relaxed investment restrictions, with a number of multinational companies investing in new plants. Additionally, the privatisation entailed by the SAP enabled some of these companies to expand rapidly, with the federal and state governments divesting themselves of breweries and agro-processing plants. These factors appear to have stimulated a concentration in the industry, with a series of acquisitions and takeovers resulting in just twelve big companies dominating the sector by the end of the decade.

The companies with the greatest expansion included (Heineken-owned) Nigerian Breweries, Unilever Nigeria, Guinness Nigeria, Coca-Cola, Cadbury Nigeria and (British American Tobacco owned) Nigerian Tobacco. All of these companies expanded fairly rapidly in the first years following the SAP, with Nigerian Breweries by far the strongest performer, increasing its turnover from N179 million in 1985 to N811 million in 1989. There is still a lively debate about the significance of these changes amongst economic historians studying Nigeria's SAP, partly due to the high inflation. However, even critics like Ifeanyi Onyeonoru accept that this was "a rosy period of the SAP."⁶⁹ Certainly, with inflation still at the relatively calm rate of 7.45% in 1990, the gains were not entirely swallowed up by the hyper-inflation that took hold by the mid-1990s.

Rise of promotional activities

In addition to the growth of multinational FMCG companies in Nigeria, these operations became far more concerned with promotion during this period. Albert Alos has shown how before 1986, Nigerian FMCG manufacturers had "ignored issues of customer satisfaction and

⁶⁸ Ifeanyi Onyeonoru, "Globalisation and Industrial Performance in Nigeria", *Africa Development-Senegal* 28, no. 3/4 (2003): 36–66. Onyeonoru points out that the rapid exchange rate depreciation led to the increasing price of imports.

⁶⁹ Onyeonoru, "Globalisation and Industrial Performance in Nigeria", p.55

effective marketing practices. Marketing was viewed as allocation...”⁷⁰ This situation soon changed radically, with Onyeonoru describing “aggressive product sales promotions” during the SAP period. Large national and international advertising agencies expanded in Nigeria, as did the artisanal advertising industry. The latter developed greatly as a result of the FMCG-companies’ needs for advertising posters. In my research with a cross-section of printing companies in Lagos and Onitsha, the patronage of the FMCG multinationals in the late 1980s was noted as the first time that the small-scale printing industry had received large orders for advertising posters, with Nigerian Breweries, Guinness, Unilever, Rothmans and Benson and Hedges noted as particularly important patrons.⁷¹

Following a contraction in the Nigerian economy between 1993 and 1998, there was a renewed expansion following the return to power of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999. Whilst the FMCG sector has continued to be a major patron for promotional industries, two other sectors have emerged as major sources of funding. The telecoms sector has also expanded rapidly, following the deregulation of mobile telecoms and the GSM (Global System for Mobile communication) auction in 2001. As a result of this process, several huge telecoms players emerged, eventually merging into the “big four” of MTN, Glo, Etisalat and Airtel. Characterized as a “buyer’s market”, in which there are almost no transaction costs in changing suppliers, the telecoms industry has become a major player in promotion, and is particularly important in sponsorship in the television industry.

Shortly after the explosion of the telecoms sector, there was also a great expansion in the banking industry. Unlike in telecoms, this followed a wholesale extension of regulation. Beginning in 2004, the Central Bank of Nigeria introduced a series of measures including the imposition of a very high minimum capital requirement for all banks, thus forcing a radical consolidation in the industry - with only 12 Banks existing nationally by 2009. Alongside FMCG and mobile telecoms, this newly concentrated banking sector has become a third source of promotional patronage.

⁷⁰ Albert J. Alos, “Creating Value Under Uncertainty: The Nigerian Experience,” *Journal of African Business* 1, no. 1 (January 2000): 9–24, see p.16.

⁷¹ (it had previously relied on orders for books, newspapers and pamphlets)

Promotional Installations

The large FMCG firms that grew in the late 1980s engaged in a broad range of promotional activities, including print advertising (which I explore elsewhere). However, they were distinctive in their heavy use of promotional installations. These are marketing forms produced through material fabrication, which include elements of event marketing (product launch events, trade fairs and exhibitions) and sales promotions (including point-of-sale installations, competitions and prize draws). As a type of promotion, they overlap with - and at times meld into - distribution. Whilst spectacular product launches celebrate the start of a new product's distribution, point-of-sale installations promote the products directly to consumers in shops.

Although product launches and other promotional installations are a major economic activity in Nigeria, they have never been studied in an academic context.⁷² I therefore give a brief overview of their history before analysing their development.

The early history of product launches in Nigeria

In Nigeria, product launches for large companies were handled by foreign agencies until the late 1980s. These early launches were generally rather staid affairs, with the “ribbon tape-cutting” usually providing the dramatic climax. In 1990, this situation was transformed when the US giant Xerox planned to launch their colour photocopier onto the Nigerian market, contracting a British crew to design and package the event. The company had also organized for the set specialist Steve Obigbesan from the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) to give technical support to the foreign team. On finding out the specifications of the job, Obigbesan was nonplussed by the “very boring” British design and appalled by the cost. He therefore contacted Duro Oni in the theatre department of the Centre for Cultural Studies at the University of Lagos and suggested that he make a counter-proposal to Xerox. Oni was an expert on lighting design and had already worked on many Nigerian theatre and television productions, as well as founding his own equipment company, “Durolights, Sound and Vision” (DSV).⁷³

⁷² The document cited below in the following footnote is a celebratory rather than academic document.

⁷³ Sola Fosudo, “Products and Corporate Events Design and Presentation in Nigeria: A Study of Duro Oni’s Legacies,” in *Fireworks for a Lighting Aesthete: Essays and Tributes in Honour of Duro Oni @ 60* (Lagos: Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization, 2012), 64–77.

Oni immediately got to work on a design and set up a demonstration at the Arts Theatre in the university. The Xerox representative, who had been looking for something more distinctive than the conventional launch format, was “simply mesmerized” and decided to award Oni the contract. Oni applied many ideas from his theatrical and televisual background to the design,

I adopted the simple but theatrical idea of opening of flats placed on castors, thereby revealing the product on a beautiful platform to the full glare of the audience. This was accompanied with smoke effects, fireworks, strobe and other lighting and pyrotechnic effects.⁷⁴

The Xerox launch was received very positively in the press as well as alerting other large companies and advertising agencies to local companies’ capacity to design product launches. It also stimulated Duro Oni to branch into launch production more concertedly. Shortly after the Xerox success, he collaborated with architect Theo Lawson on the launch of Unilever Pears Baby Powder. Here, Oni focused on lighting whilst Lawson designed the set in a production that was novel in its heavy use of pastel-coloured helium balloons. Oni and Lawson continued their collaboration on the Legend Extra Stout launch of 1992, which took the art of the Nigerian product launches to a new level and set a template for subsequent launches (see below).

Following the Legend Extra Stout Launch, Lawson’s company Total Consults became dominant in the product launch landscape, working with the country’s largest advertising agencies including Lintas, the J. Walter Thompson-owned LTC Agency and Insight Communications. Over a period of nearly 20 years, Total Consults carried out 40-50 product launches per year. They did launches for the full spectrum of consumer brands, including Blue Band Margarine, Fanta, Coca Cola, the Nigerian Bottling Company, Nigerian Breweries, Gulder Beer, Star Beer, Maggi Noodles, MTN telecoms, and Citizens and First Banks. Each brand would do multiple product launches for every new sub-brand: Maggi for example, commissioned separate product launches for Maggi Classic, Maggi Chicken, Maggi Shrimp and Maggi Super Crayfish. The product-launch side of the business was described by Theo Lawson as its most important activity - as its “bread and butter” - helping the company grew to a peak of 50 employees, including architects, interior decorators, engineers, carpenters, electricians and welders.⁷⁵

Total Consults also fabricated giant mock-ups of the products both for the product launches and for the point-of-sale installations or “merchandising units”. The company manufactured

⁷⁴ Fosudo, “Products and Corporate Events Design and Presentation in Nigeria,” quoted on p.75.

⁷⁵ Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

multiple copies of the mock-ups for these point-of-sale events: usually in batches of around 20-30, rising to 50 in some cases. They were particularly popular for the FMCG companies, including such brands as Lulu Drinks, Coca-Cola, Maggi Noodles, CAPL Toothpaste and Blue Band Margarine. These were carefully constructed to be robust as they were transported to states around the country and were designed for “consumer interaction”. A giant Legend beer bottle, for example, was made from wood using,

layers or rings of particle board which we now shaped into the upper part and [the lower part] was essentially frame wood which we had covered in quarter ply... and the base too was similar to the top, so it was a bit heavy.⁷⁶

The Nigerian product launch as hyper-animation

Although dramatic product unveilings are not unique to Nigeria, the launches were distinctive in their hyper-animation of consumer goods. It was relatively rare for the designers to use metaphorical advertising imageries.⁷⁷ Instead, they preferred to give centre-stage to iconic representations of the products and logos, so that the consumer goods became the stars. The huge mock-ups of the goods were roughly of human size at 4-6ft. At times, these giant mock-ups almost had a Dalek-like quality. Duro Oni’s production for the launch of *John Players Gold Leaf* in 1993, for example, comprised a six-foot Players’ cigarette pack sitting on a small ship on a motorized track. The ship would move to the centre-stage before the pack would self-open, and the cigarettes would mechanically pop out from inside the giant box.

The competition to find new types of motion for the products was striking. Theo Lawson, for example, complained that the giant products in Duro Oni’s shows lacked sufficient variety of motion.⁷⁸ He set to work to improve the situation, culminating in his production for the launch of *Legend Extra Stout*, held at the National Theatre Main Bowl in 1996. He used the “invisible” fishing line to suspend a 6ft-high bottle of stout from the ceiling of the Bowl. At the moment of the launch, it was released apparently unsupported - and caught by “big body guys in gladiator skirts”. The bottle was then set down on the revolving platform - accompanied by flashing lights and pyrotechnics. The launch was a watershed for local product unveilings as it was “the

⁷⁶ Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

⁷⁷ - with the Coca-Cola and Access Bank launches as exceptional

⁷⁸ Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

first time something like that had been done in Nigeria” and set the template for subsequent launches.

Lawson reached a pinnacle in theatricalization through his production of a series of open-air dramatic happenings. For the launch of the new Coca-Cola, he constructed a number of life-size military vehicles and artillery pieces including tanks and rocket launchers. They were set up on the roof of the prestigious Eko Hotel to stage a mock battle between the sides representing Coca-Cola and Pepsi. On this occasion, the line between drama and reality became so blurred that the spectacle caused panic. Lawson recalled how he suddenly saw a lot of guns and real-life soldiers arriving to put down the “coup”!⁷⁹ This situation was only resolved when the “military vehicles” were removed from the roof of the hotel. In a similar vein, Lawson and his protégé Yomi Oyojobi fabricated several full-size “trains” for the launch of a new Access Bank product. They made the trains by converting old “coaster” buses, remodelling some to look like the front motor units and the rest as the train cars, before linking them all together. The vehicles were then driven through Lagos city and the wider state to convey the message, “Come join the Access bank train!” For Yomi Oyojobi, it was the launch of which she was most proud, “It looked exactly like it was a train on tyres... it was really beautiful, spectacular!”⁸⁰

The open-air nature of these launches heightened their realism, with the theatricalization fully melding into everyday life - as reflected in the panicked response to the artillery pieces. They were also significant in bridging the gap between the product launch space and the point of sale, further intertwining promotion and distribution - with the Access Bank trains literally rolling out towards the customers.

From around 2000, Total Consults began to face competition from the workshop of Pat Nebo. As we have seen, Nebo was a leading film set designer who had trained in Fine Arts in Italy and in technical production skills with the Nigerian Television Authority. Like Oni and Lawson, Pat Nebo strove to achieve the hyper-animation effect, but in different ways.⁸¹ He brought a new style, focusing on installations of spectacularly large proportions. On one occasion, for example, he built a full-scale Man O’ War ship, measuring 160 x 30ft. His trademark launch was to use real-life versions of goods to build enormous structures. For the Star Beer launch, he built a 72ft-high Christmas-tree-shaped tower using 8000 bottles. The feat achieved

⁷⁹ Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

⁸⁰ Interview with promotional craftsperson Onoyomi “Yomi” Oyojobi, 26 May 2017

⁸¹ Interview with art director Pat Nebo, 19 February 2016

considerable awe and press attention and entered the Guinness Book of Records as the highest tower built from bottles in human history, beating the previous Chinese holder of the record. Nebo brought his experience from film-set design to further theatricalize the launches, carefully choreographing the unveiling, music and pyrotechnics together and adding elements of illusion. As Total Consults moved into other areas from around 2008, including producing the telenovela *Tinsel*, Nebo's workshop has become the dominant in the product launch arena.



Fig. 23-a and 23-b. Pat Nebo's tower of Star-beer bottles for product launch.

Further elements of the Nigerian promotional-installation ecosystem

In recent years, Nebo's set competitor Mr Bedford and his protégé Williams have also entered the product launch sector. They have focused specifically on the point-of-sale installations. Their first job was in 2015 for an order of 60 decorative CD stands for the launch of Nigerian hip-hop artist Iyanya's CDs in the SLOTS electronics chain. The stand was made of perspex and had the form of a treble and bass clef supporting a guitar, whose frets doubled as the shelves for the CDs. More recently, Williams won an order to create 50 lucky-dip boxes for the launch of Nutribix's *Wheat Crackers* Biscuits.

On a more humble scale, point-of-sale installations are also widely produced by independent carpenters for individual shops and smaller chains. For example, carpenter Hakeem, who works partly as a sub-contractor for the film industry, found success in producing framed

mahogany stands that were placed outside shops to announce new products and attract customer's attention.



Fig. 24. Mahogany stand for sale promotion by carpenter Hakeem.

The product launches also commonly included a prize-draw imagery. In addition to Williams' lucky-dip boxes, Theo Lawson constructed three "raffle drums" that he used for his own product launches as well as hiring out for many others. The draws took place both at the point of sale, as in the Williams case, and during the launch events. They formed a major part of the shows, and in the cases of the bigger brands stimulated audience participation through awarding valuable prizes, such as cars and laptop computers.

Trade fair exhibition stands constitute another important category of promotional installation. Lagos is a major centre of trade fairs with Eko Hotel, the National Theatre and the "Tradefair" complex as the key venues. Most of the companies that produced product launches were also active in creating exhibition stands. Total Consults did stands for a confectionary and cake-baking companies at the Nigerian Catering Fair, for the educational-materials provider Edumark at the National Education Fair, for Toyota at the Lagos International Fair as well as for Peugeot, LG and Diamond Bank at various other events. These stands were often elaborate, at times resembling stage sets. Mr Bedford, for example, had a long-term contract to construct the stand for the Chinese energy company Hexing at the Future Energy Conference in Eko

Hotel, for which he used his full experience in perspex and light-boxes to make a beautifully illuminated exhibition booth.

In addition to the fabrication-orientated firms that get the promotional-installation contracts from advertising agencies or directly from the companies, they also employ specialist sub-contractors - especially in the area of special effects and pyrotechnics. Mr Samuel Alade (known as Mr Sam) is a leading innovator in this field, pioneering the development of several new technologies including the remote triggering for the “special shooter/exploding bomb” and the “exploding cake”.⁸² He started his own company, Content Links Productions, in 2005 and he has provided special effects for all of the top product-launch set creators including Theo Lawson, Pat Nebo and Mr Bedford.

Analysis Part 1: point-of-sale installations

In the case of the point-of-sale installations and trade-fair exhibition stands, a strong connection emerged between the “filmability” aesthetic of the film/TV set and the materiality of the new installations. I observed this relationship in a number of the promotional installations made by Mr Bedford, including the SLOTS CD stands and the Hexing Trade Fair exhibition kiosks. The focus here, however, will be on the detailed case study of the *Nutribix* lucky-dip boxes.

In May 2017, Williams Omolu, Mr Bedford’s chief foreman, accepted a contract to independently produce lucky-dip boxes for the Nutribix biscuit company.⁸³ Williams was contracted by the advertising agency Dijo Communications for the job, having been recommended by one of the firm’s executives, Mrs Amaka Emerole. Amaka had been impressed by Williams’ work when he was working on the *Nigerian Idol* set for Mr Bedford and she had been the production manager.

The job was relatively large, involving the production of 50 decorated boxes, and required Williams to employ three of Mr Bedford’s workers – Gerald Oluneme, Godday Ogbotobo and Sylvester “Fireman” Osigwe – to help with the job. The boxes were part of Nutribix’s new “Buy and Win!” promotion to launch their new flagship *Wheat Crackers* biscuit. In this promotion, customers who bought four packs of Wheat Crackers biscuits could take part in a lucky dip, in

⁸² Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

⁸³ Interview with senior manager Williams Omolu, 17 July 2017

which they would pick a ticket from the box for the chance to win a Nutribix T-shirt. The boxes were to be placed in 50 supermarkets around Lagos and the neighbouring states, including the prestigious Shoprite chain.

Williams' team created the boxes in two main stages. In the first stage, they built the cubes out of Perspex with a circular hole on one side (in which the contestant would place his hand). Then, in the second stage, they would affix the thin Self Adhesive Vinyl (SAV) sheeting with the Nutribix Logo onto the outside of the box.

The construction process involved the application of several techniques the carpenters had learnt in building sets. The measuring, cutting and gluing used to build the Perspex boxes was similar to the skills they practiced in constructing the "light-boxes" for the sets. Similarly, the techniques necessary for sticking the SAV on the outside of the boxes were like those needed for attaching various sheetings on to Perspex and glass on set. The latter may sound rudimentary but it actually required a high level of expertise, and was one of the most valuable transferable skills to come out of set production. Of his team, Williams adjudged only himself and Gerald to have the requisite mastery of the technique to work on this part of the Nutribix boxes.

In regards to the covering, Gerald remarked that in general, the smaller the surface to be laid, the easier the task. However, the promotional nature of the box required that the paper had to be affixed with an equally great degree of precision as the vinyl floor on a stage.⁸⁴ When Williams presented the first completed box as a sample to the agency, he was cautioned to be very careful:

Because we know it is for promotion and proper branding it has to be more perfect, we can't afford to have any bubbles or air pockets... so we had to put extra effort and concentration.⁸⁵

Whilst documenting Williams and Gerald's work covering the boxes with the SAV, I noted the painstaking level of precision needed to lay it as flat as possible and then to smooth over any tiny bubbles. Each had his own individual technique. Williams would precisely align the SAV with the side of the box and simultaneously begin to pull off its backing whilst pressing down and smoothing it with a credit card. Gerald preferred to stretch the SAV around the box, and smooth by hand and he used a bare razor blade to nick the air pockets and smooth them over.

⁸⁴ Interviews with set manager/craftsman Gerald Uluneme, 3 June 2017/9 July 2017

⁸⁵ Interview with senior manager Williams Omolu, 17 July 2017

Amazingly, these tiny nicks would decompress the bubbles without compromising the smooth appearance of the surface. In completing this task, Williams and Gerald applied the fine tools they had used in other areas of set production (see the example of the food-shaped Tastequest transfers) to the task of laying sticky sheeting. The relative difficulty of this stage was reflected in the fact that it created a serious bottle-neck in the workflow, causing the whole job to get late whilst the other two carpenters could just wait around for Williams and Gerald to finish.

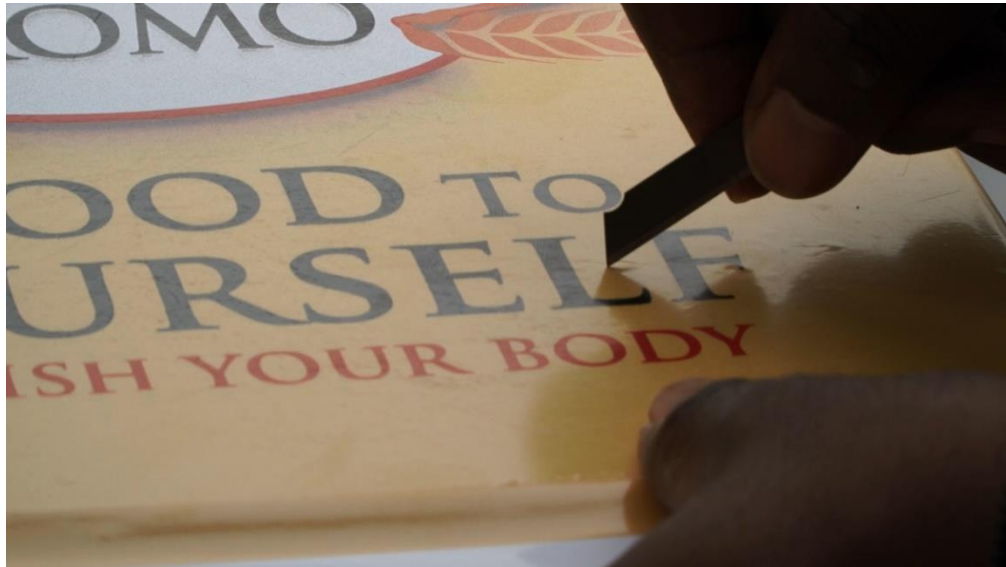


Fig. 25. Gerald uses a bare razor blade to nick the air bubbles before smoothing over.

Whilst the carpenters transferred their practices from sets to promotional boxes, the challenges were subtly different and some improvisation was required to adapt them to the new promotional purpose. First, the project required improvisation in relation to the organization of the whole production process. Unlike the custom one-off sets - which generally required one of everything - the boxes constituted a form of batch production, with the batch mode requiring greater systematization in labour organization.⁸⁶ This led Williams to improvise with shop-floor innovation. Although Williams had little space – the job took place in his own compound – he formed the four-man team into a miniature production line. First Gerald would cut each piece of Perspex with the Perspex cutter before handing it to Godday, who would remove the protective film and thoroughly wash it with soapy water, who would then hand it to Fireman who would use the motorized sander to smooth it. Once sanded, the Perspex piece

⁸⁶ Philip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997)

was taken upstairs for Williams to add to the next six-sided box. This process was repeated for the batch of 306 near-identical Perspex pieces.

A further modification was in the specific technique used to cover the boxes, which resulted from a requirement for improved tactility. On-set, the carpenters were used to affixing sheeting onto surfaces (such as stages or Perspex panels) but not onto three-dimensional objects. This recalls the particular “filmability” characteristic of only finishing some types of furnishings in a fragmented, incomplete form.

The Nutribix boxes, on the other hand, were not designed to be filmed but rather to be picked up by the public, so had to be finished on all sides. It was therefore necessary to specially cut and fold the paper over the box’s sides, a process Gerald described as “nipping over the angles” and which he saw as especially challenging.⁸⁷ Williams had mastered this technique to a greater extent and was somewhat more confident. Having stuck the SAV to the surface of the box, he would score the SAV’s corners, and remove small triangular pieces, allowing it to be folded over neatly, almost like wrapping a present. He would then use the blunt edge of his knife to smooth the SAV over the rounded edges of the box.



Fig. 26-a. Williams “nipping over the angles” - cutting and folding the paper over the box’s sides.

Tactility was also important in the sense that the boxes had to provide easy handling, with a smoother and lighter feel needed than the set carpenters’ conventional light boxes. The light boxes had hard wood or aluminium frames that were attached to the perspex using screws and rivets. These would have been too jagged and heavy for the Nutribix boxes, so Williams

⁸⁷ Interviews with set manager/craftsman Gerald Uluneme, 3 June 2017/9 July 2017

decided to join the perspex using an active glue, which was also a more economic alternative for the larger production volume. In a similar vein, the agency insisted that the edges of the hand-hole needed to be smoother, having inspected the first sample box. Williams and Fireman therefore carefully filed the edges of the holes in each box and Williams perfected a technique by which he would neatly make radial slices in the SAV and then fold them under the sides to give a beautifully smooth appearance. His inspiration for the technique came from his on-set experience on *Project Fame*, in which he had folded the SAV sticker under the (much more regularly-shaped) table on the main stage.



Fig. 26-b. Williams tucking the radial slices of the hand-hole



Fig. 27-c. Williams' Team posing with complete 50-box batch

Reflecting on the job a year later, Williams reported that his switch into promotional installations was continuing to be a success. In the intervening period I had personally witnessed his Nutribix boxes in action in Lagos supermarkets and played the lucky dip myself, winning a limited-edition Nutribix fridge magnet. Dijo Communications reported that their client was impressed by the boxes and it continued to pass on similar jobs to Williams, most recently, an end-of-year awards' stage-set for Danone Milk Nigeria.

Overall, Williams' box can be understood as a variant of *off-camera* filmability. As in the case of the home furnishings and set-workers' dress style, the *filmability* aesthetic was transferred to another non-filmic context. On this occasion, Williams took the aesthetic he had learned on filmed-set of *Project Fame* and deployed it in the new context of the branded point-of-sale installations. In accordance with Meyer's concept of "aesthetic formations" and specifically the "picture-image-picture" chains, Williams formed the mental image from the material picture of the set, before then rematerializing this in the lucky-dip boxes. However, the box was also a bit more than a picture. As discussed in chapter three, Meyer's sense of materiality is largely optical. Williams' modification of his fabrication technique to ensure tactility is more akin to Ingold's concept of materiality as touch-orientated and "immediate".



Fig 27-d. The author playing the Nutribix lucky dip at Berger hypermarket, Lagos

Analysis Part 2: Product launches

Unlike the point-of-sale installations and exhibition stands, product launches represented a more complex entwinement between three speciality-consumer sectors: film-set production, carpentry and fabrication, and the events industry. During the period of Duro Oni's and Total Consults dominance from 1990 to the mid-2000s - the latter two were most significant. Since the early 2000s, Nollywood set practice has had a greater influence, contributing to the evolution of the product launch format. In particular, it has led to developments in two areas: "animating" special effects devices and synchronization and triggering mechanisms.

Early product launches: events and fabrication

The Nigerian events industry had developed rapidly from the late 1980s.⁸⁸ It included public events such as awards ceremonies, concerts, beauty pageants and church events; and private events like weddings and birthdays. These events involved the co-ordination of stage construction, lighting, sound, catering, red carpets, videography, backdrops for press-photo opportunities and comedy and musical sideshows.

The events industry had a special kind of theatricality, which can be termed "showmanship", that was distinct from that of the film industry. Its dramatic set-pieces were designed to be

⁸⁸ Prior to the late 1980s, events had been rather solemn affairs, with "pomp and pageantry, rather than Razzmatazz". However, this began to change with the foundation of the annual Christmas beach concert, the 7-Up sponsored *Lekki Sun Splash* in 1988..

particularly impressive in real life and were more like feats or marvels than theatrical drama. For example, it emphasized pyrotechnics as well as elements of great size or vertigo-inducing height, such as the aerial acrobatics of Tony Okoroji's⁸⁹ descent from the top of the National Theatre during his National Music Awards (NMA) in 1989. The type of drama that events industries produced also tended to be concentrated in the moment, rather than paced over hours as in the film industry; and there were no chances for second-takes. So the event industry's focus was on dramatizing split-second events - such as the announcement of the main award recipient, the winner of the beauty-pageant crown or the cutting of the wedding cake. Another element central to "showmanship" was audience participation - such as through prize draws or allowing people to trigger the pyrotechnics themselves. Mr Sam - who specialized in pyrotechnics and special effects for events, felt that the key to a successful event was for people to "get involved" because it was specifically this that "gives them joy".⁹⁰ Lastly, the events employed an element of pageantry - epitomized by the red carpets and photo-opportunity backdrops - that were first seen (in a non-political context) at the NMA awards.

Many of the early product launch practitioners in "Durolights, Sound and Vision" and Total Consults had backgrounds in the events industry. Lawson and Oni's first collaboration - before product launches - was in events, when they produced a beauty pageant in Lagos in 1990. Moreover, many of their workers were fully dedicated events professionals. Theo Lawson's main assistant in his product-launch division, Yomi Adejobi, for example, had been chosen due to her experience as an events decoration expert.⁹¹

These practices were combined with those coming from the fabrication sector (especially carpentry and architecture) in the early product launches. Theo Lawson was trained in architecture, as were several of his top assistants including Femi Dada. Both Lawson and Duro Oni also employed a significant number of carpenters who had served apprenticeships as furniture-makers.

The showmanship of the events seemed to mould the form of the fabricated objects - giving them an imprint of "showmanshipability", comparable to the filmability of the filmed objects. This included the hyper-animation and giant size of the mocked-up products seen in the Players and Legend Extra Stout Launches, the awe-inspiring height of Nebo's towers, and the

⁸⁹ Tony Okoroji is the former president of the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria and founder of the Nigerian Music Awards in 1989.

⁹⁰ Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

⁹¹ Interview with promotional craftsperson Onoyomi "Yomi" Oyojobi, 26 May 2017

extreme use of pyrotechnics across many of these launches. In some cases, the particular set-piece formats from events were replicated, but with the fabricated mock-up directly replacing the human star.

An example of such an intertwinement is the trope of lowering a giant product mock-up from the ceiling, as first seen in the Legend Extra Stout launch. For the 1991 edition of the NMAs, Lawson had noticed that there was a bar fixed to the ceiling of the National Theatre that held up the stage curtains and got the idea that it could be used to lower a person down from the top of the building. After the main compere of the event suffered a bout of last-minute stage fright, Tony Okoroji volunteered himself to be lowered down. The event began in pitch black, before a spot light was shone onto the top of the room, accompanied by dramatic music, and followed Okoroji as he descended to the floor. The feat was received with great excitement, with the audience just “looking at the spotlight, [asking] who is that? The thing started coming down and they just went crazy!”⁹²

The only functional difference between Okoroji’s descent and the Legend Extra Stout lowering was that Okoroji was replaced with the giant bottle in the latter case. Although I didn’t question Lawson directly about this, Okoroji’s dramatic descent from the ceiling at the NMA awards occurred just a year before the first descent of a giant product - Lawson’s Legend Extra Stout bottle - in 1992. Furthermore, the two events occurred at exactly the same venue - the Main Bowl of the National Theatre. In staging his NMA descent, Okoroji and the National Theatre support staff had run tests establishing the loadability of the curtain rails for such an operation so it seems highly plausible that it directly facilitated the latter feat.

Later product launches: influence of film-set practice

“Animating” special effects devices

Special effects practitioners working between sets and events have introduced a number of “animating” special-effects devices: including the “confetti shower” machine, the “low-fog” machine, the smoke machine and the “bubble-blowing” machine. These devices have been used to imbue people, occasions and fabricated objects with “liveliness” in different moods. In this area, the special effects pioneer Mr Sam Alade is a figure of great importance, having been instrumental in introducing several of the above devices over his twenty-year career.

⁹² Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

Manual confetti-throwing has long been a popular element in the Nigerian events industry. It was used at moments at which a person achieved something miraculous – for the winner of a prize, award or beauty pageant, or for saluting a newly married couple. It was considered to be one of the most versatile techniques – its twinkling wonderment conveying a sensation that Mr Sam described as like “birth or rebirth”.

In 2007, Mr Sam made a great breakthrough in Nigerian confetti technology when he imported the country’s first “confetti shower machine” from China.⁹³ The machine was a response to the need to adapt the confetti effect for the camera lens. The throwing of confetti (or the use of an earlier machine that “blasted” petals) was not optimized for the film camera because the effect was too fast, with the confetti petals not lingering in the air long enough to fully reflect and dazzle in the shot. The “confetti shower” machine solved this problem as it showered slowly and continuously, regulating the flow of petals. Mr Sam used it for the first time in the show *Project Fame West Africa* in 2008, and thereafter has deployed it for numerous programmes, including *Nigerian Idol*, *X Factor Nigeria* and *Glo Dance Hall*. In a similar vein to the sets, the use of the confetti-shower machine involved making a modification for the purpose of filmability – with the only difference that the modification involved an events-effect rather than a set furnishing, as in the former case.

Although the “confetti shower machine” was specifically brought in for its properties on camera, its effects were also greatly appreciated by live audiences. The machine has therefore also come to be used extensively for product launches and is currently the only “animating device” that is used at almost every type of launch. Mr Sam considers the machine to be particularly suitable for the moment of product revelation due to the confetti’s “birth and rebirth” property. In his view, confetti is “the key [to product launches]... because it shows that you are actually introducing something new into the market!”⁹⁴

The film-set has also stimulated other types of innovations in the use of “animating devices”, especially in the art of matching each animation technique to the character of each object. Mr Sam first used the “low-fog machine” – which creates a low-lying “dry-ice” fog - for a film production shot at the University of Lagos. The art director had requested that he use it to convey a ghostly presence and- following its success - he went on to use it for the same purpose in numerous film and television shows. Apart from ghostliness, Mr Sam also used low-

⁹³ Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

⁹⁴ Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

fog to convey romance or eroticism, and – outside Nollywood – it became popular for the first dance of newly married couples at wedding receptions. The very specific guidance Mr Sam had received from the art director reflected the enormous emphasis Nollywood “set-and-prop men” placed on depicting animated objects, such as shrines, in ever more “accurate” and “realistic” ways.⁹⁵

Mr Sam’s experience working with the directors using the “low-fog machine” made him understand that the “animating effect” of each machine “has to *go with* the thing it is trying to depict!”⁹⁶ Whilst he loved the new low-fog effect, he came to the realization that it would not be satisfactory for product launches because it would not “depict [the products] in a true way.” He therefore turned to look for alternatives that could provide a similar but more appropriate effect, settling initially on the smoke machine.

The smoke machine was a success – creating a “moody night atmosphere” and enhancing the beauty of the light rays in a similar way to the low-fog machine. However, Mr Sam still wanted to enhance it, to find an effect that would “exactly depict” the product. In 2009, he made a breakthrough in this project when he imported his first “bubble-blowing machine”, again from China. The machine contained angled fans that blew air into a detergent “bubble solution”, producing over one thousand bubbles per minute. On receiving the machine, Mr Sam had an inspiration – he could use it to perfectly animate the launch of toiletry products! His first launch with the new machine was for the PZ Cussons’ product, Premier Cool Soap. Mr Sam positioned the bubble machine directly behind the giant replica soap-bar, so that at the moment of the ribbon-cutting the soap-bar started bubbling. The bubbling Premier Cool Soap bar constituted a great step forward in the “hyper-animation” of product launches – with the giant product not only looking like, but also behaving in the same way as the original bar of soap. As Mr Sam proudly stated, “Bubble machine replicates something that foams. When you see bubbles, what comes to your mind is something that is foamy!” Mr Sam has gone on to repeat the effect in the launch of many other toiletry products, including the recent unveiling of the new Dudu Osun soap bar.

⁹⁵ Birgit Meyer has delved deeper into this issue in her analysis of the fabrication of the occult in Ghanaian and Nigerian films. She argues that in Nollywood there is an ethos of “spectraphilic pleasure” (*Sensational Films*, 241) in which the depiction of both ghostliness and eroticism is reliant on the perfect execution of “technicity” conveyed by the devices used in special effects.

⁹⁶ Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

Synchronization and triggering mechanisms

During his career in product launches, Theo Lawson had constantly searched for new ways to better synchronize the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon, the revealing of the product and the launching of the pyrotechnics.⁹⁷ Central to his practice was the use of the “invisible” fishing lines. He created a set-up whereby the celebrity would cut the ribbon, at which point a technician at the back would cut the invisible fishing line at a point indicated by a bow. This would then either release the curtain to drop down or the product to descend from high-up. At the same moment, the “chief launcher” would press the button to initiate the pyrotechnics.

Whilst Lawson took the first steps in confronting the challenge of product-launch synchronization and triggering, Sam Alade’s entrance into the industry in the early 2000s led to even greater advances. Many of the techniques that Mr Sam introduced into the launches were strongly influenced by those he had originally developed for both film sets and the events industry.

In the events industry, the challenges of synchronization related to creating surprise and enabling audience participation - particularly at birthdays and weddings. When he first entered the industry, Mr Sam had used a simple system for cake-cutting at such occasions. The “celebrity” would cut the cake and Mr Sam would be watching carefully from a hiding place - the moment the knife touched the cake, he would detonate the fireworks. However, he was not satisfied with this set-up, as most party attendees were already familiar with the trick, “everybody is expecting [the pyrotechnics man] to strike when the time comes”.⁹⁸ He had even noticed the celebrants scanning the bushes and other hiding places in the moments before the explosion and understood that he needed to re-instate the illusion by using a new form of concealment. He also felt that it was not sufficiently participatory - he wanted the celebrity to feel a sense of direct connection with the explosion. He therefore decided to make the knife itself the triggering device, by putting a contact inside the cake, which completed the circuit when the knife broke through. The “exploding cake” succeeded as it “got the celebrity involved... it gave him joy”, with Mr Sam’s services being sought by a number of “big men” and the device soon being copied by other pyrotechnics experts for similar events.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Interview with CEO Theo Lawson, 7 June 2017

⁹⁸ Interviews with special effects specialist Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam), 29 September 2015/20 August 2017

⁹⁹ Including those whom Mr Sam had trained.

On the film and television sets, the main challenge of synchronization also involved surprise, with a particular emphasis on concealment. Mr Sam had much experience working at Ultima and other studios, where the imperative was “nobody can know where [the firework] is coming from - we must remain in the back-stage, nobody should see you!” Before Mr Sam, no-one in Nigeria had the knowledge of how to make a remote-triggering system for fireworks. When Mr Bedford wanted a remotely triggered “exploding bomb” for the set of a new TV pilot, he went on a trail that took him to someone in Britain, who put him in touch with somebody in New Zealand. Whilst Mr Bedford was negotiating with the expert in New Zealand, Mr Sam found out and decided that he would set himself the challenge to make the triggerable bomb himself.

Mr Sam experimented with different signalling devices, before finding that he could effectively synchronize a remote control (designed for compound gates) with the exploding bomb. The bomb was a success, impressing Mr Bedford, and Mr Sam went on to create a number of similar devices. He started experimenting with car remote controls, managing to link one of his lighting panels to it, and successfully used it as a remote control device for the special shooter. This device was complex - the controller enabled the “shooter” to rotate, whilst the imported alternatives were static.

Since entering the product launch arena, Mr Sam has regularly used the remote-controlled special shooter for the launch of pyrotechnics at the moment of unveiling. Of all the launches at which he has used it, its greatest success was at the launch of the new Guinness ‘Malta’ soft drink. For this launch, the giant Malta figurine was set up on an undercarriage that was affixed to a track. When the unveiling moment came, Mr Sam’s team operated two devices. The first was a “moving iron” attached to the back of the platform that pushed the giant figurine along a walkway extending into the audience. The walkway was lined with pyrotechnics, which Mr Sam had synchronized to separate channels on his remote control, which he held inconspicuously whilst standing in the audience. As the Malta figurine moved down the walkway and passed by each shooter, Mr Sam triggered the corresponding pyrotechnic with the remote control. The effect was received with wonder because “nobody knew who actually shot the firework, and then it came by surprise, and it made the event more glamorous!”

In terms of a direct technology transfer, it was the invention from the film set (the remote-controlled special shooter) - rather than from the events (the exploding cake technology) - that was of immediate use in product launches. However, it seems likely that the detailed knowledge and overall sensibility linking synchronization, surprise and participation that he

gained in both industries contributed to the later advances he made in this area for product launches.

Section 3 Reflections: Product launches as an “inverted Nollywood”

Adamson, Scranton and Forbes and Wield have highlighted cases in which the craft sector intertwines with mass-production in a way that ultimately helps the latter develop. They see craft as underpinning mass-production through its role in tooling. My analysis suggests that these modes have fruitful interactions in alternative ways: that the “craft displacements” can have quite different configurations. In the product-launch case studies, practices from craft production played a key role in *marketing* for the routinized format. Specifically, craft production from the TV/Film and events industries intertwined with the mass-production FMCG industry. The rebranded FMCG sector combined mass-production (FMCG manufacture) with speciality marketing (the FMCG product launches). In this sense, it can be imagined as a kind of “inverted Nollywood”, flipping the TV/film industry’s combination of speciality-production and mass-marketing. To put this another way, the speciality workers were engaged in a fairly similar activity of theatricalized craft fabrication in the two industries but this activity played almost opposite roles in their respective value chains.

This section has also put a focus on the ways in which fabrication combines with theatricality and showmanship. Although several of the craft theorists are strongly influenced by the concept of “performativity”, they are largely silent on this topic. Glenn Adamson is an exception. He has modified Gell’s approach by arguing that the imprints of “technology” are not essentially enchanting but are made that way through theatrical concealment and acts of illusion and likewise need to be theatrically revealed in order to have an impact on the viewer. The processes of concealment and revelation are thus as important to ‘narratives of making’ as the imprint itself. Adamson points to acts of concealment such as the secrecy surrounding the 19th-century ceramic recipes and public demonstrations by master locksmiths who would challenge audiences to break their “impregnable locks.”¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 1-6

Conclusion: Chapter 6

This section has analyzed furniture carpentry, sets and promotional installations through two analytical categories: craft displacements and the fine-grained concepts of the reproductive process. In the first - craft displacements - the marketing of mass-produced furniture was shown to operate as a model for custom-production by Nigerian craftsmen. These processes contributed to a “catalogue aesthetic”: the newly fabricated furnishings have a jutting, contextless, and airbrushed quality, just like out of a catalogue picture.

The section on set-fabrication focused on the production stage of the value chain and emphasized the specific craft displacements within the film and television sector. This involved custom production on the one hand (the fabrication of the furnishings) and a custom-batch hybrid (the filming process) on the other. The analysis of promotional installations combined elements of the craft displacements in the other two sectors. This comprised a craft-displacement across production and marketing – with mass production of the FMCG goods combined with craft-based marketing techniques originating in the film production and events sectors. In the second – on the fine-grained concepts of the reproductive process, I found the aesthetic formations concept to be particularly helpful for understanding furniture carpentry and cultural improvisation in the analysis of sets.

Finally, this chapter has revealed the ways in which fabrication combines with theatricality and showmanship to contribute to the new Nigerian Pastoral. In the case of set carpentry, the form of the furnishings and stages was adapted for the purpose of “filmability.” The main implication for the materiality of sets was in the use of soft (fabric coverings, curtains and carpets) and shiny (perspex, oily finishes, vinyl, glass, aluminium) materials. The events industries involved a special kind of theatricality or “showmanship” with dramatic set-pieces that were especially impressive in real life and were more like feats or marvels than theatrical drama. In the early product launches, these showmanship practices were combined with fabricatory techniques to create hyper-animated and giant-sized mock-up of products, awe-inspiring towers and extreme pyrotechnics.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The introduction posed a main research question and three sub-questions. In this conclusion, I show how these sub-questions were addressed and finally the implications for the main research topic. This structure draws together the findings from the two parts of the thesis, then reflects on their significance and suggests new paths of policy and research.

How have Nollywood and the Igbo built environment interacted to produce new kinds of scene?

Houses

From the early 1990s, the Nollywood House Scene and the Nollywood Production Cluster articulated with each other in ways that shaped them both. A house scene already existed prior to the advent of Nollywood, which included architectural features that conveyed an “overpowering awesomeness” (*money authentication* and *money-making*), and a defensive castle-like presence on the other (*money-protection*).

From the early 1990s, filmmakers began to make use of the houses as filming locations, taking advantage of commodious working environments, empty properties and hospitable owners offering the houses without charge. The presence of the filmmakers initiated the transformation into the Nollywood House Scene. In the first decade, the *money-authentication* aesthetic appeared to be enhanced. The awesomeness was accentuated as the scene incorporated the reflexivity offered by the Nollywood lens, allowing the houses to be opened up to a wider audience. This seemed to enhance the “money authentication aesthetic”, adding to the sense of “real wealth”. The interaction with the filmmaking cluster also led to the widespread emulation of “Nollywood Houses” throughout Igboland, with distinctive features such as the front-column-pediment structure popping up on new houses throughout the Igbo landscape.

From around 2008, a multi-stranded crisis developed in the relationship between the Nollywood House Scene and the Nollywood Production Cluster. Rather than consolidating the houses as *money-authenticating*, Nollywood seemed to tip them into being *money-making* forms. The relationship with the filmmakers could be seen as a sign of poverty or as complicity with the Nollywood’s supposed practice of “blood-money” rituals. This

resulted in the houses being closed off, thereby embracing the “aesthetic of money-protection”, and therefore no longer being available for Nollywood shooting.

The crisis led to new types of scene emerging, with three main innovations. First, domestic space started to be commodified, with house owners now demanding fees from filmmakers. This development was largely welcomed by the filmmakers as relying on hospitality had become onerous, with the informal arrangements incompatible with increasingly professional film production. Commodification of domestic space was a highly significant development because a high proportion of Igbo capital lies in mansions that are usually empty and are thus effectively operating at a low capacity. There had previously been very high cultural barriers to leasing out rooms for any purpose. This development could have even more far-reaching consequences if room leasing is now extended beyond the film industry. Currently there is a complete mismatch between a vast non-occupied housing stock and a simultaneous chronic lack of rental accommodation or short-term rental market. The cultural change presaged by Nollywood could contribute to a change in this situation, or lead to the houses becoming available for other commercial uses, especially for events industries.

A second important outcome of the crisis was that the Nollywood House scene became mobile - moving on to Asaba. In Asaba, the scene took on a slightly different character than it had in Enugu. Due to the city’s distinct political culture and the local governor’s policies, the Nollywood houses were able to take on the “aesthetic of money authentication” in a more stable way than in Enugu. Despite this, some of the same processes that undermined the scene in Enugu have ultimately also affected Asaba, causing the scene to move on again to other cities.

Lastly, new types of space were created that melded together film sets and living residences in novel ways. Housing estates sprung up integrating Nollywood into both their business models and into their architectural form. By allowing filming in houses prior to sale, the estate owners actually managed to convince potential buyers that the houses actually existed. Surprisingly, the Nollywood fantasy world thus contributed to the sense of “realness” and the successful implementation of an “aesthetic of authentication”. In addition, Nollywood style was also incorporated into the houses’ forms, with the interior decoration styles initially introduced by set decorators now extended across all the properties.

Hotels

As in the case of the House Scene, a Hotel Scene also existed prior to the advent of Nollywood. The first generation of hotels in the early 1980s employed both an architecture and communication technologies that conveyed “overpowering awesomeness”, thereby achieving an “aesthetic of authentication”. From the mid-1980s, a second generation of hotels emerged. Whereas the first generation had been an outward manifestation of wealth, they were interpreted - and reproduced - as the source of the whole wealth. Although these hotels had a very similar appearance to the earlier ones, this development caused them to flip into the *aesthetic of money-making*.

In the early days of Nollywood’s engagement with the hotels, the relationship was more important for film production than for the hotel scene. As a factor input into the filmmaking process, hotels were of crucial significance. Most importantly, they provided lodging for cast and crew and they were also used as shooting locations, especially for bedroom scenes. At this point, Nollywood was a peripheral part of the hotel scene. Hotels were important social hubs and actors were amongst the least notable people present.

From 2002, the Nollywood hotel scene began to really flourish. Unlike the houses, the hotels already had a *money-making aesthetic* so there was no crisis in the relationship with Nollywood. Nollywood’s star culture complemented the kind of activities that were already going on at the hotel’s bars and restaurants and enhanced them as places for developing financing networks. For the filmmakers, hotels continued to provide useful lodging space for cast and crew. However, there was a rising discontent with hotels as shooting locations, mainly due to the increasing scale and professionalization of film production.

In the most recent phase, since 2012, the Nollywood “lodging” hotels have deepened their relationship with Nollywood, evolving into fully fledged “star spaces.” This new breed of hotels are now primarily focused on lodging Nollywood actors and crew. During their leisure time, the stars frequent the hotels bars and restaurants, with particular stars becoming synonymous with certain hotels. Several of these hotels have now established formal associations with the stars, whose names and faces now adorn the hotels’ marquees. The owners and managers of the hotels have become so socially integrated into the film business that some have now ventured into the film business themselves, using their own hotels to lodge their crews.

In response to the needs of the new style and scale of production, there have been several innovations in the form of “shooting” hotels. In some cases, hotels’ interiors have been

temporarily transformed using sophisticated new set-construction techniques to match the productions' exact specifications. A second response has been to create entirely new types of buildings, melding together aspects of film studios and hotels¹. These include hotels purpose-built for filmmaking, whose interiors have been colour coded and co-ordinated for the needs of shooting. In a similar vein, "African fantasy" themed hospitality and event venues have been transformed into blended film-studio-like spaces catering for the shooting of "epic", campus and glamour movies.

¹ In an alternative way to the new housing estates

How have Nigerian techniques of material fabrication developed to produce new styles of furnishings, sets and promotional forms?

Furnishings

In the case of furniture carpentry, the carpenters tended to copy imported mediations such as catalogues and television shows. In turn, these material pictures shaped the way in which the furniture styles were reproduced. The process is understood in terms of Meyer's picture-image-picture chains, with the foreign mediations on one end and the surface appearance of the newly constructed furniture on the other. These processes contributed to a "catalogue aesthetic" in several ways. First, there was a heightened concern for the surface-appearance of the furnishing, with more space for free play in the internal structure. Moreover, the newly fabricated furnishings have a jutting, contextless, and airbrushed quality, just like out of a catalogue picture.

Sets

In the case of set carpentry, the form of the furnishings and stages was adapted for the purpose of "filmability." They were fabricated to be visible to the camera lens rather than the human eye and therefore took on special properties. These included: increased precision, an illusion effect, internal durability/external malleability, partial completion and characteristic colour schemes (deep colours, grey and black). The main implication for the materiality of sets was in the use of soft (fabric coverings, curtains and carpets) and shiny (perspex, oily finishes, vinyl, glass, aluminium) materials.

This process has been explored with reference to Ingold's "cultural improvisation": the fabricated sets join together past, present and future in that they bear a trace of their making process (from the catalogue pictures) and leave a trace on the things that they go on to make (in the frame of the films). However, the set furnishings operate in a "backwards" as well as "forwards" direction. They are not simply made objects but "will make" objects that are made in anticipation of the next stage of production. They are patterns and moulds as their contours do not purely reflect their making processes but also reflect the shape of the things they will form. In this sense, they mirror Alfred Gell's observations on "Vogel's Net" in which he argues that "all implements are models of their users because they have to be adapted to their characteristics."

The particular "optical" characteristic of "filmability" was also considered. As in Gell's concept of a pattern or mould, the set leaves a physical imprint on the camera sensor. This imprint is

“immediate” - contra-Meyer - as it is fully determined by the set’s (and sensor’s) material properties and is not mediated through an imaginary. However, in accordance with Meyer, this physical imprint is optical rather than tactile; and optical in a special way that goes beyond ordinary human powers of perception.

Later developments in “filmability” were also explored. The initial “filmability” aesthetic of woods, fabrics and oils proved to be highly unstable, with Lagosian sets devastated by a series of fires from 2010. The fires stimulated two main changes in the “filmability” aesthetic. First, they created “new originals”, with the destroyed Lagos sets now providing a second touchstone in addition to the “old” originals provided by the foreign pictures. This recalls Ingold’s view that each “work comprises the accumulating trail of its performances - each one copying a copy of a copy - every performance becomes part of the ever-evolving work.” Second, fires created an imperative to increase the durability and versatility of sets. As a response to this, the “total-metal-collapsible” galvanized steel sets were developed. These new structures constituted a modification to the filmability style with a move away from the primacy of soft materials.

Another important development in the “filmability” phenomenon has been the off-camera reproduction of the aesthetic. In the first example, “filmability” was adopted as a style for non-filmed home furnishings - with set elements sold off for home use, third-parties reproducing the styles for the local market and the set companies moving into furniture production themselves. In the second case, set workers would apply the filmability style to their own clothing and bodily adornments, mirroring the set as its appearance changed.

The move of filmability *off-camera* can be helpfully analysed through Meyer’s concept of picture-image-picture chains, with the case paralleling that of the “catalogue aesthetic.” In terms of these chains, the development completes a circle through which a distinctive Nigerian furnishing style has begun to emerge: from foreign furniture, to imported catalogue pictures, to local furniture (in the “catalogue aesthetic”), to set-furnishings (in the “filmability aesthetic”), and ending with the local furniture (also in the “filmability aesthetic”).

Promotional Installations

The analysis then turned to promotional installations - including product-launch events, trade-fair exhibitions and point-of-sale displays. In the case of point-of-sale displays - such as Williams’ box - a strong connection was established between the “filmability” aesthetic and

the materiality of the new installations. In particular, the set techniques of crafting perspex “light boxes” and the smooth self-adhesive vinyl coverings had great value for building these marketing installations. Like in the case of the home furnishings above, this can be understood as a form of “off-camera” filmability. The slight modifications Williams made to the aesthetic for the promotional installations reflected the new usage - with the changes reflecting a tactile rather than an optical form of materiality.

In contrast to the point-of-sale displays, the product launches represented a more complex entwinement that involved the events industries in addition to the carpentry and set fabrication sectors. The events industries involved a special kind of theatricality or “showmanship” with dramatic set-pieces that were especially impressive in real life and were more like feats or marvels than theatrical drama. In the early product launches, these showmanship practices were combined with fabricatory techniques to create hyper-animated and giant-sized mock-up of products, awe-inspiring towers and extreme pyrotechnics. For the more recent product launches, techniques from sets also combined with events industries’ practices. This has included the use of animating special effects devices such as the confetti and bubble machines; and synchronization and triggering devices for cutting ribbons, unveiling products and launching pyrotechnics.

Craft displacements

In chapter five, I put forward the concept of “craft displacements”. Through this concept I propose that a sector could be characterized through its unique combination of speciality and routinized production and marketing techniques. Drawing on Robert Foster, I argue that the particular form of “singularization” that such combinations comprised could be a source of unique styles and therefore competitiveness. Underlying my approach is the idea that local craft techniques could be incorporated in the “non-craft sector” in novel ways.

In the case of furniture carpentry, the craft displacement comprises mass-produced furniture marketing (the catalogue pictures) on the one hand, and custom production by the Nigerian artisans on the other. Set-fabrication involves a craft displacement within the production process, but with the added complexity of the television context. Here, we have seen a displacement that involves custom production in the first stage (the fabrication of the furnishings) and a custom-batch hybrid (the filming process) in the latter.

The existing literature has argued that the speciality-producer format underpins mass-production industries through tooling. I have argued here that there is a complementary process, in which the speciality-consumer format can support the marketing for the mass-production sectors. The promotional installations combine mass-production with speciality marketing. They can be imagined as a kind of “inverted Nollywood”, flipping the TV/film industry’s combination of speciality-production and mass-marketing.

Overall, has a “Nigerian Pastoral” style begun to emerge and what are its features?

A core argument in the thesis is that through the circulations of skills, imaginaries and materials between creative producers and tasteful consumers, distinctive product styles have been incubated. This process has been conceptualized through the device of the Nigerian Pastoral.

Prior to embarking on my fieldwork, I already had formed an idea of what a Nigerian Pastoral might be like. In my probation board document I described it as “an imaginary world of sumptuary consumption... including Nigerian-made home interiors, including furniture, indoor ornamentation, vases, external gates as well as clothes and shoes.” Looking back at my thinking, two features of my pre-conception stick out: first, that people in Nigeria would self-consciously identify a Nigerianness about this “Pastoral”, and second, the actual content of the aesthetic was rather thin - it was little more than a pastiche of replica foreign luxury goods.

After six months of field research, I felt rather disillusioned with the concept of a Nigerian Pastoral. My attempts to ask interviewees about a Nigerian style that was fundamentally distinct had largely been met with blank looks. Most of my informants placed greater value on either getting hold of “original” imported goods or fabricated copies that matched the originals “EXACTLY!” Any distinctiveness I did see was limited to the conventional “fashion” categories like clothing. In my report sent back to my supervisors in November 2015, I admitted that,

I am beginning to question whether interiors are as important as I originally thought. Where I was expecting there to be “re-imagining” of foreign influences, I have found what appears to be wholesale copying, often directly from British catalogues...Domestic space does not seem to be a locus of people’s creative efforts...

After returning home in Spring 2016, I began to re-evaluate my findings. Ruminating over my research notes, I suddenly realized that I had in fact found a Nigerian Pastoral but had not recognized it as both of my original pre-conceptions were wrong: the pastoral was simultaneously less self-conscious and more substantial than I had expected.

In this thesis I have traced two forms of the Nigerian Pastoral. The Razzmatazz form predates film production and is strongly evocative of, and rooted in, particular places and geographies. The “catalogue aesthetic” comprised a key aspect of Razzmatazz. Intense focus was placed on precise copying of imported pictures, such as furniture-catalogue pages. In these cases, the attempt to make an exact copy of the foreign objects produced a kind of non-specificity, but the overall effect was one of highly local or vernacular realism. As in the tiny catalogue photos,

the furnishings had a generic or air-brushed appearance. This orientation extended to the way the rooms were composed by designers and home-owners: the individual items appeared out of context, either not harmonized with their surroundings (as in the solo item picture in the catalogue) or mimicking the placement in the pretend-rooms of the catalogue.

The landscape of “rural towns” also forms an important part of the Razzmatazz style. These include patchworks of mansions and modest dwellings as well as areas like Abiriba that are more comprehensively gentrified. Specific architectural styles associated with “overpowering awesomeness” - such as the large column-pediment structures with front balconies, and elaborate multiple column forms - are also characteristic. The sparseness associated with the “catalogue aesthetic” accentuated the sense of vastness in the interior spaces of these houses. This included large areas of blank wall, very little ornamentation, interior balconies and mezzanines, sweeping staircases and high ceilings.

In contrast to Razzmatazz, the Glamour style originated in studio-based television production in Lagos. It involved a kind of “blurred” style, which included the use of plain flat colours and abstract patterns. These were beneficial because they could be re-used more easily for new sets without it being noticeable to audiences and also because it was easier to reach an aesthetic harmony with these plainer designs.

As we have seen, the earlier Razzmatazz style involved making precise copies from pictures. By contrast, the Glamour style involved fabricating furnishings for the creation of pictures and scenes. They were therefore made with the property of “filmability”. This included an aesthetic of soft and shiny materials and deep and dark colours

Beyond the technology of the camera and lights, there were also other factors why a “blurred” aesthetic was commensurate with filmability. Television companies did not want any patterns that were ethnically or nationally specific - rather opting for vague patterns that were generally evocative of African themes and designs. Similarly, commercial concerns for intellectual property meant that studios avoided internationally recognizable posters, artworks and brands.

In almost a mirror image to Razzmatazz, the Glamour “blurring” produced a sensation that, although artificial, was considered to more successful at “looking real” (in a naturalistic way) than the Razzmatazz style. This contrast between the realisms of Razzmatazz and Glamour recalls Walter Benjamin’s distinction between aura and trace: “the aura is the appearance of a distance, however close the thing that calls it forth [i.e. Razzmatazz]... the trace is the

appearance of nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be [i.e. Glamour].”

The emergence of the Nigerian Pastoral has implications for Nigerian industry beyond both the housing/interiors sector and the domestic market. Through the exploration of the Miss Nollywood pageant as cultural branding, it was shown that the “awesomeness” associated with the pastoral can contribute an events industry (beauty pageants) and also to investor marketing for a multiplicity of sectors (through “courtesy visits”).

In terms of its geographical reach, the Nigerian Pastoral has also begun to have an impact in other African countries. In Ghana, I investigated the power of the Nigerian Pastoral through research with tailors and seamstresses. Customers would come to their market stalls and request that their garments would be made using Nigerian media materials. These included stills from Nollywood films, as well as Nigerian catalogues in which Nollywood actors and directors acted as models for Nigerian clothes. This echoed the earlier “catalogue aesthetic” in Nigeria that used British catalogues as their models, with the Nigerian catalogues themselves becoming the models in Ghana. In addition, the Ghanaian informants drew a strong connection between their ideas of the Nigerian Pastoral and an atmosphere of celebration - with the tailors reporting that their customers tended to ask for the Nigerian-style designs for events such as weddings.

Whilst still an area that needs further research, the Nigerian Pastoral may have a similar influence in the case of Ghanaian interiors. Nana Kwaku Koi, a graduate of the private Central University asserted that “Nigeria is more than a country, it is a lifestyle!”² For him, the Nigerian interiors were a key part of this lifestyle - even more than the clothes - and he had decorated his bedroom (both at home and at university) accordingly. Nana had reproduced the style from the 2012 Nollywood Movie *Mr & Mrs*: the walls were painted red with white dots, and blue/black trimming, with a matching colour scheme for the curtains. In his room at the university, he had changed the curtains and carpets to gold, in order “to make it even more Nigerian.”

² Interview with student Nana Kwaku Koi, 23 August 2015

5. How can we understand the Nigerian creative-industrial system through the window of Nollywood? Does an exploration of this system suggest a possible path for industrialization in Africa?

In this thesis, the trans-sectoral complex of Nigerian consumer-orientated industries was investigated.³ The carpentry/small-scale fabrication and houses/hotels sectors were explored through their interactions with Nollywood. These are significant in economy-wide industrial functions, including investor-marketing, sales promotions and event marketing.

The study proposes a possible new path for industrialization in Africa by suggesting a move away from dominant development approaches. On the one hand, it is at odds with the leading “free-market” style approach. These “export led” models focus on improving a country’s competitiveness in the production of globally established, standardized products. They focus on competing through optimizing a calculus of productivity and unit labour cost. Such “Aid for Trade” policies currently include large-scale infrastructure construction across the continent. At the same time, my approach is at odds with the main “alternative” or “critical” development schools - of which many of the “heterodox” economists are members. These approaches emphasise a return to protectionism and non-consumer-orientated manufacturing industries.⁴ In my approach, however, the emphasis is on developing distinctive unique national or local consumer product styles through a focus on the domestic market - in a similar way to Berg’s eighteenth-century model.⁵ The approach therefore combines the market-openness of the free-market approach (i.e. imports and foreign media are a key inspiration for the development of the local styles) with the domestic-market import-substitution focus of the “heterodox” school.

An interesting implication of this argument is that it seems to suggest that the models we use for African economies should look more like the ones already being used for economies elsewhere. My focus on such areas as the film industry, house and hotel sectors, events

³ Sally Weller, “Beyond ‘Global Production Networks’: Australian Fashion Week’s Trans-Sectoral Synergies,” *Growth and Change* 39, no. 1 (2008): 104–122

⁴ For an example of an argument for protection see Lindsay Whitfield, “How Countries become Rich and Reduce Poverty: A Review of Heterodox Explanations of Economic Development”, *DIIS Working Paper* 2011:13, (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2011). For an example of an argument for a focus on traditional manufacturing industries see Hazel Gray and Lindsay Whitfield, “Reframing African Political Economy: Clientelism, Rents and Accumulation as Drivers of Capitalist Transformation,” Working paper (International Development LSE, October 2014)

⁵ Maxine Berg, “In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, no. 182 (2004): 85–142

industries and the marketing sector echo those of recent models being used for western economies. Concepts that have become important in Europe and America over the last 20 years - including the Creative Economy and the Experience Economy as well as longer established models (e.g. the service economy⁶) - share remarkably similar concerns.

Echoes of Earlier Industrializations

Part Two of the thesis, on fabrication techniques, had strong parallels with the industrialization narratives from eighteenth-century England and twentieth-century America. As in the English case, imported goods and mediations played a key role in stimulating new styles and tastes. In turn, attempts to reproduce these items and their imageries using local technologies led to their transformation and emergence of new styles. As in the Hollywood case, the film camera was an especially important type of technology in this reproduction, with “filmability” being a key concern. In these cases, film almost seems to function as an alternative to imports - in that it has the imaginary power to stimulate new styles and tastes.

Unlike in the earlier cases, there was not a conscious effort to produce a Nigerian style or pastoral. Whereas Wedgewood tea-sets and “California lifestyles” had been embraced quite deliberately in England and America, the Nigerian style seemed to emerge in a less intentional way.

In Part One, the specific contours of the Nigerian narrative on houses and hotels were quite distinct, but there are also certain parallels. The general rise in the capital expended on houses, domestic space and furnishings echoes the eighteenth-century English case. Moreover, it recalls Trentmann’s argument that the revolution in consumption was not just stimulated by imports but also more gradual endogenous changes in accumulation and the ethics of spending. In terms of a comparison with twentieth-century Hollywood, the representation of houses in the movies played an important part in their emulation in both cases. The alteration of the Nigerian houses to correspond with the practical and logistical needs of film production also has similarities with the adaptation of clothing styles to comply with the “organizational exigencies of the [Hollywood] film industry”.⁷

Molotch’s observation that Hollywood set construction workers gained the skills “that all other fantasists needed - technical skills and resources in converting fantastic ideas into realities”

⁶ Mauro F. Guillén, *The Limits of Convergence: Globalization and Organizational Change in Argentina, South Korea, and Spain* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), see especially pp.183-212.

⁷ Censorship regulations in his case

seems relevant to both parts one and two. The melding of fantasy and reality is clearly exhibited in the case of the new blended film-studio-living-residence buildings⁸. In a similar vein, the giant consumer goods created for the Nigerian product launches have a striking parallel with the “hyper-real” mimetic architecture of the giant hot-dogs and donuts in Los Angeles.

Future Research

Considering possible directions for further research, my preliminary data-collection (not drawn on in this thesis) could be used as a starting point for thinking about other sectors in the same trans-sectoral complex. These include the events industries; the tailoring and garment sector; and the printing and artisanal advertising industries. In his notion of the “movie industry complex”, Molotch suggests even wider horizons - adding tourism, eateries and even automobile industries to the list.

I consider the events industries to be especially promising and had originally intended a third part of the thesis to be devoted to this topic. As mentioned, this includes public events such as awards ceremonies, concerts, beauty pageants and church events; and private events like weddings and birthdays. They connect strongly with both the topic of fabrication and the house and hotel scenes. The fabrication of stages and sets for events such as weddings and awards ceremonies constitute a key relationship. In one significant example, I found that that the epic movie genre had stimulated a completely new style of “traditional” wedding ceremony. Many of the set fabricators from these epic movies had diversified into building the settings for these real-life weddings. Houses and hotels usually provide the venues and lodging places for the events. An exploration of events would therefore bring a unity to the study, bridging across to both carpentry/fabrication and the built environment.

⁸ i.e. The housing estates, purpose-built shooting hotels, and African-fantasy-themed shooting resorts

Appendix: Schedule of interviews

1. Built Environment

a. Hotels

Buffy Okeke Ojudu	20 April 2017
Michael Adigwe	21 April 2017
Dr Mrs Chinwe Sam-Amobi	02 May 2017
Prince Anthony Okoli	08 May 2017
Echezona Anthony Okeke Ojudu "Chief Tony"	8 May 2017/12 May 2017
Julie Obiagiele Okenwa (Afobi Africa Centre)	16 May 2017
Michael Amadi	16 May 2017
Mr Boniface Uchechukwu	17 May 2017
Mr Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi "Onye Eze"	17 May 2017

b. Igboland Location Managers and House Owners

Chinedu Arinze	14 December 2015
Chimeze Bright	15 December 2015
Piccolo Chidese Oye	20 December 2015
Sylvan Ogbuakugbummadu	25 April 2017
Toni Ikechi	06 May 2017
Mrs Chiamaka Jonas Okorie	19 May 2017
Remi Ajibua-Ajayi	27 May 2017

c. House Professionals: Architects and Interior Designers

Shia Lee, Onitsha architectural draughtsman	19 December 2015
Interior Design firm Southwood	19 December 2015
Ifanyi Ene	22 December 2015
Professor Okey Nduka	02 May 2017

d. House Owners

Shiela Egemonye	29 December 2015
Alex Egbonike	03 January 2016
Benson Okonkwo	05 May 2017
Judge Mrs Mary Ukaego Odili	12 May 2017
Chairman Babatunde O. Gbadamosi	30 May 2017

2. Set Fabrication

a. Set Men Lagos

Pat Nebo	19 February 2016
Byron Ene	25 July 2015
Arokari Opeyemi Daniel	09 June 2015
Hillary Patricks	08 June 2015
Mr Bedford Bedford Baloebi	10 June 2015/31 March 2017
Omoshebi Omolulu Leo Spartani	10 February 2016

b. Set Men Employees Lagos

Hakeem independent carpenter	09 July 2015
Sanusi Taiwo Rasaq "Ewe"	11 July 2015
Gerald Urueme	13 July 2015/3 July 2017/9 July 2017
Jason construction contractor	13 July 2015
Okwara Regan "Mr Biggie"	13 July 2015
Aremu Kaseem	13 July 2015
Isiah Olayemi	13 July 2015
Ify Orji Ifechukwudeni Goodness	13 July 2015
Agaba Clement "Favour"	13 July 2015
Mr Charles Maglin "Mr Charles"	14 July 2015
Andrew Oluoha "Mr Andrew"	14 July 2015
Tosin Lesami "Aluminium Tosin"	14 July 2015
Akinloa Samuel "Opa"	15 July 2015
Femi Akinuga (Mr Femi)	23 July 2015
Odejemi Timitopwe Oluwa Seun "Seun"	24 July 2015/14 August 2015/16 June 2017
Moses Inibwibewo	25 July 2015
Abiola Anafor Sheem	27 July 2015
Akinola Bayemi "Yemi"	06 August 2015
John Oluwashei Emmanuel "Shei"	06 August 2015
Tosin Mustafa "Bale"	08 August 2015
Austin Ekhaiyeme (2 interviews)	10 August 2015/23 November 2015
Edet site supervisor	21 September 2015
Kem Derem Obasi "Kemmo" Marshall (painter)	23 September 2015
Alade Samuel Olusanmi (Mr Sam)	29 September 2015/20 August 2017
Israel Owkalu(cleaner)	30 September 2015
Williams Omolu	17 July 2017

c. Igboland Set Men

Chidi Equezu	18 December 2015
Sean Israel	23 December 2015
Sele O Sele	24 April 2017
Jude Chukwuma Odo	25 April 2017
Gabriel Okorie AKA Gabazzini	27 April 2017
Okonkwo Ifeanyi Uchukwu	27 April 2017
Godswill Destiny	17 May 2017
Peters Nwaokike Udegbulam	18 May 2017

3. Other film/TV professionals***a. Directors***

Yinka Akanbi	05 June 2015
Obi Emelonye	03 February 2016
Kennechukwu Okafor	23 April 2017
Chijoke Jonas	19 May 2017

b. Videographers/Cinematographers/Photographers

Patrick Afun (cinematographer)	06 June 2015
George Steadicam operator	01 August 2015
Comfort camerawoman	01 August 2016
Arinze Stephensen (Photo videographer)	26 April 2017
Uju Uzochukwu (DOP, Videographer)	26 April 2017
Charles White Ukwuani (Cameraman)	27 April 2017
Igwelkechwu Frankie (Cameraman)	27 April 2017

c. Costumiers, tailors and garment professionals

KC tailor interview	23 June 2015
Jane Michaels	03 October 2015
Ogoo Okechi	15 December 2015
Doris James	15 December 2015
Adepeju Sonuga Olori	19 February 2016

d. Theatre Studies Department

John Igbonekwu, UNN	25 June 2015
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lecturer	
Ndebussi Nana, director graduated UNN	26 June 2015
Dr Felix UNN lecturer in costume/makeup	26 June 2015
UNN student Alexandra Agah	26 June 2015
UNN student Nnamdi Kanaga "Sinclair"	26 June 2015
UNN student Chris in special effects makeup	26 June 2015

e. Nollywood Marketers

Ken Simon	17 December 2015/ 12 January 2016
John and Ikechukwu (Onitsha market)	17 December 2015
Cornelius Ucheama	12 January 2016
Abiodun Olaribigbe	26 June 2017

4. Other Industry Sectors

a. Promotional Installations

Femi Dada	25 May 2017
Onoyomi Oyojobi	26 May 2017
OnoyomiOyojobi	26 May 2017
Uzoma Mike Ebuka	04 June 2017
Theo Lawson	07 June 2017
Theo Lawson	07 June 2017

b. Printing and artisanal advertising in Onitsha and Lagos

KEL Technologies Manager	27 December 2015
Bendy Amobi	02 January 2016
Ogechukwu "God's Time"	05 January 2016
Crystal Communications Manager	09 January 2016
Alex Esiobu	12 January 2016
"Imacol" Ndebussi Nana	01 February 2016
Folanre Tunde	02 February 2016
"Kingsize" Daniel Oluchukwu	05 February 2016
Professor of printing at Yaba College of Technology	07 February 2016
"Joko" Mike Alantujo Njoko	13 February 2016

c. Awards and Events industries

Nsengbong Okolepo	20 February 2016
Vanguard newspaper business editor	21 February 2016
Jahman Anikulapo	23 February 2016
Otunba Biodun Ajiboye	26 February 2016
Benjamin Njoku	27 February 2016
Femi Akintunde Johnson	
“FAJ”	4 April 2017/6 April 2017
Okechukwu Gabriel Nawachukwu	08 May 2017
Godwin Praise “Peggy”	
Ekene	21 May 2017
Akinwale Oluwaleyimu	06 June 2017
Kingsley James	08 June 2017
Bolaji Durojiye	09 June 2017
Teju Kareem	16 June 2017
Chief Tony Okoroji	19 June 2017
Jimmy Jatt	25 June 2017
Jimmy Jatt (DJ)	25 June 2017
Edi Lawani	13 July 2017

5. Ghana interviews, including tailors

Nana Kwaku Koi graduate	22 August 2015
Seth television producer	25 August 2015
Linda seamstress	27 August 2015
Richard tailor	27 August 2015
Enam Jah tailor	27 August 2015
Miriam seamstress	27 August 2015
Esther seamstress	27 August 2015
Frieda Naa seamstress/curtain seller	29 August 2015
Richard fashion designer	29 August 2015
Amos tailor/fabric supplier	29 August 2015
Abas tailor/fabric supplier	29 August 2015
Stanley tailor	29 August 2015
Alex tailor	29 August 2015
Amihere Ena Adjoba make-up artist	31 August 2015
Adnan Sanni tattoo artist	01 September 2015
Rasta tattoo and piercing artist	01 September 2015
Teresa beauty therapist	01 September 2015

6. Other Categories

a. Focus Group

Luke Mochengo	11 April 2017
Adeniji Duromi	11 April 2017
Ganiu Soyinka	11 April 2017
Femi Okunade	11 April 2017
Ade Olatunde	11 April 2017

b. Ad Hoc

Latif at University of Lagos	30 March 2017
Goodness at Nucfam hotel	14 June 2017
Stephen Chinedu Ikeogu (metallurgical engineer)	16 April 2018
Chekwas Obasi (physician)	21 April 2018

c. Other

Victor animation artist	07 July 2015
Femi Ayeni (Managing Director)	06 October 2015
Judge Peter Eze	29 December 2015
Adaeze Okoro (Miss Nollywood)	22 June 2017
Mr. RobynzGawa	23 June 2017
Mrs Chairman Princess Uchenna Ugwu	06 May 2017

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